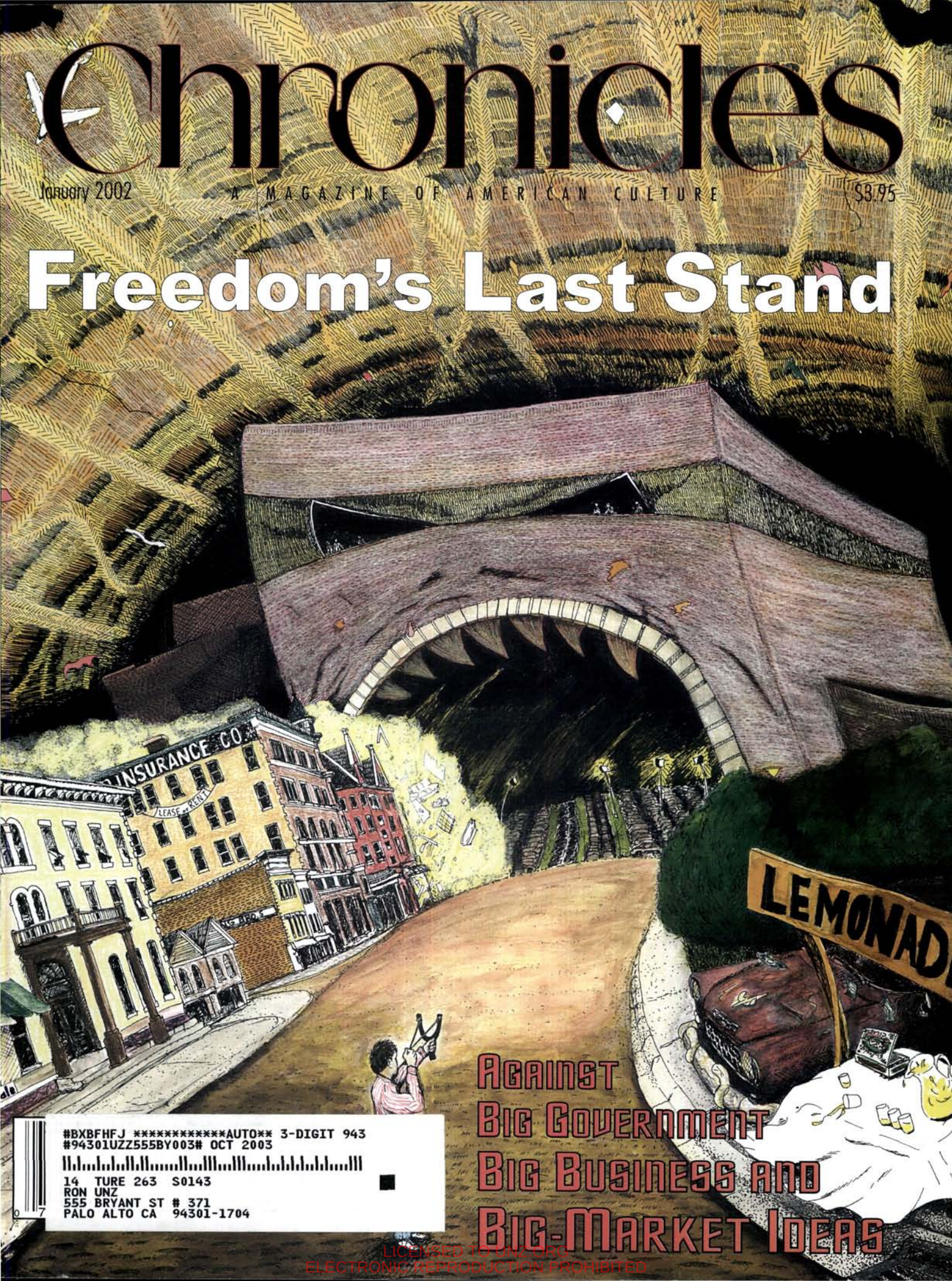

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Chronicles

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A publication of The Rockford Institute.
Editorial and Advertising Offices:
928 North Main Street, Rockford, IL 61103.
Website: www.chroniclesmagazine.org
Editorial Phone: (815) 964-5054.
Advertising Phone: (815) 964-5813.
Subscription Department: P.O. Box 800,
Mount Morris, IL 61054. Call 1-800-877-5459.

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Chronicles: A Magazine of American Culture
(ISSN 0887-5731) is published monthly for $39.00 (foreign subscriptions add $12 for surface delivery, $48 for Air Mail) per year by The Rockford Institute, 928 North Main Street, Rockford, IL 61103-7061. Preferred periodical postage paid at Rockford, IL and additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to *Chronicles*, P.O. Box 800, Mount Morris, IL 61054.

The views expressed in *Chronicles* are the authors' alone and do not necessarily reflect the views of The Rockford Institute or of its directors. Unsolicited manuscripts cannot be returned unless accompanied by a self-addressed stamped envelope.

Chronicles
A MAGAZINE OF AMERICAN CULTURE

Vol. 26, No. 1 January 2002
Printed in the United States of America

On Honest Abe

I am an unabashed lover—not a worshipper (I reserve that for Someone Else)—of Abraham Lincoln, forever grateful for what he was and what he did for our country. While I don't question the patriotism of *Chronicles*' editors, I believe it is supremely ironic that you publish your magazine from the "Land of Lincoln," since you have so clearly chosen up sides with his critics, then and now. Joe Sobran's first *Bare Bodkin* ("Abe-Worship," October 2001) is merely the latest such effort.

Mr. Sobran's primary thesis, amidst all his critical rhetoric, is that Lincoln "embodied a tradition of which he was actually ignorant." He "seldom appealed to the Founding Fathers" and "got this wrong" when he did mention them in the Gettysburg Address. He also "got wrong" his understanding of states' rights and the "plausibility of secession" (despite the fact that Lincoln's views on secession were virtually indistinguishable from Andrew Jackson's). Mr. Sobran asserts an inability to discern anything other than "fleeting references" to the Framers in Lincoln's writings, unlike Jefferson Davis, who was "steeped in the thinking of the founding period." There are many similar denigrating remarks about Lincoln's character, motives, and his "upstaging" and "supercession" of the founding generation.

None of this criticism is really new, although the arrogance of Mr. Sobran's sweeping judgments is remarkable. These criticisms were raised in Lincoln's day and have continued ever since. My only wish is that we could deal with facts a little better as we make our judgments, and that we would all be more honest with ourselves and others about the consequences of our beliefs, opinions, and philosophies.

When Lincoln was 29, he gave a speech to the Young Men's Lyceum of Springfield, Illinois, which Mr. Sobran references and mischaracterizes. The whole purpose, tone, and substance of this address is a living refutation of Mr. Sobran's rhetoric: "Let every American, every lover of liberty, every well wisher to his posterity, swear by the blood of the Revolution, never to violate in the least particular, the laws of the country; and never tolerate their violation by others. As the patriots of seventy-six did to the support of the Declaration of Independence, so to the support of the Constitution and laws, let every American pledge his life, his property, and his sacred honor . . . let reverence for the laws . . . become the *political religion* of the nation [emphasis in the original] . . . [so that it may be said at the end] that we improved to the last; that we remained free to the last; that we revered his name to the last; that during his long sleep, we permitted no hostile foot to pass over or desecrate his resting place; shall be that to which the last trump shall awaken our WASHINGTON."

The Lincoln-Douglas debates are even more emphatically a refutation of Sobran's thesis. They are replete with reverence for the founding generation, amidst a crisis and complexity that makes Mr. Sobran's easy criticism seem disgusting. Does Mr. Sobran wish that Lincoln had not opposed the extension of slavery? Was Douglas the better man? Or is Mr. Sobran a Jefferson Davis worshipper?

What this really boils down to is that Mr. Sobran, along with the Stephen A. Douglas Northerners and Southerners, and the Southern revisionists of the re-

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cent past and present, were and are simply opposed to what Lincoln stood for and spent his life achieving. Who is more in harmony with the American founding: Lincoln, or such critics? Count me in with an observer of the 1858 debates, Henry Villard, who wrote that "the unprejudiced mind felt at once that, while there was on the one side a skillful dialectician and debater arguing a wrong and weak cause, there was on the other a *thoroughly earnest and truthful man, inspired by sound convictions in consonance with the true spirit of American institutions.* There was nothing in all of Douglas's powerful effort that appealed to the higher instincts of human nature, while Lincoln always touched sympathetic chords."

Black revisionists revile Lincoln because they read that he did not favor marriage between whites and blacks and felt blacks to be inferior, as if current views about racial relations apply. Yet he was the greatest and firmest voice against the extension of slavery. White revisionists probably have many different motivations, but they essentially spring from a conviction that either Douglas or Davis was right and Lincoln was wrong (to which they add a string of *ad hominem* epithets). Southerners usually lead this pack. No matter how great your academic credentials (e.g., those of the late M.E. Bradford, who held views similar to Sobran's), it is of paramount importance to have a clear and proper understanding of America's greatest crisis. A fundamentally flawed and mistaken understanding of this matter undermines all other judgments.

While I am essentially nothing other than a basic American, a Northerner who thinks Lincoln and the North were right, I hereby offer, at my own expense, to debate Joe Sobran, Sam Francis, Tom Fleming, and anyone else about these views of Lincoln, Douglas, and Davis. The question should be: "Was Lincoln or Douglas Right?" I will let you in on my strategy: I will liberally quote Lincoln from the debates.

—*Richard K. Mason*
Altadena, CA

Mr. Sobran Replies:

The Civil War was fought over secession, not slavery or its extension. Lincoln made this clear in his 1861 Inaugural Address. His position on secession forced him to falsify the meanings of the founding documents: the Declaration of Independence, the Articles of Confederation, and the Constitution. If he knew the great ratification debates over "confederation" and "consolidation," he gave no evidence of it; nor does Mr. Mason even offer such evidence. These questions didn't come up during the Lincoln-Douglas debates, which were concerned chiefly with slavery. There Lincoln was at his best, and Douglas, as far as I know, showed no great familiarity with the Framers' thought, either. As Mr. Mason suggests, the first president to assert anything like Lincoln's no-secession nationalism was Jackson; Douglas, in 1860, opposed secession much more explicitly than Lincoln did—even threatening to hang secessionists! True, Lincoln did express reverence for the Founding Fathers; but this does not prove he knew their writings. He said he owed all of his political ideas to the Declaration, which suggests he regarded that document as all-sufficient; I would add that he misread even that, since it affirms not "a new nation," but 13 "free and independent states." A state was, by definition, sovereign; but a confederation of states was voluntary and contingent. Even Lincoln sometimes referred to the Union as a "confederacy." Why is it "supremely ironic" that some sons of Illinois still refuse to follow Lincoln in his disastrous errors?

On Giving Yankees a Break

I have become resigned to the often gratuitous trashing of my Yankee heritage that is a regular feature of *Chronicles*. Sometimes, we even deserve it. After all, it is your magazine, and it's a very, very good one. I cannot, however, let Clyde Wilson's outrageous statement in "Confederate Rainbow" (*Reviews*, October 2001) go unchallenged. He says—and this is not taken out of context—that "In fact, the most fundamental goal of the war (and of Reconstruction) was to keep blacks out of the North."

This is on the level of Muslim journalists claiming that Jews flew those planes into buildings in New York and Washington, D.C. I can imagine that Dr. Wilson has what he considers "evidence" for this nonsense, perhaps taken from one or another demented abolitionist. I have accumulated over the years a rather lengthy list of statements by Southerners that would probably be unpleasant reading for today's defenders of the Lost Cause. But I would not try to portray them as central to the often noble aims of the Confederacy.

Can't you just hear the Willsons, my great-grandfather and his brothers, say "Let's go south, boys, and get our butts shot off so we can keep the blacks out of New York"? And maybe you can imagine how they would have reacted to anyone who tried to convince them that this was a good idea. Come on, give us Yankees a break once in a while.

—*John Willson*
Hillsdale, MI

Dr. Wilson Replies:

I am sorry to have offended my old friend Professor Willson. I stand by my statement about the most fundamental, underlying goal of the Northern attack on the South. The immediate cause of the war was the absolute barring of slavery from the territories. As Jefferson long before pointed out, stopping the "expansion of slavery" was not a benefit to the slaves but a benefit to Northern political power. Let's remember that the black population of the North in 1860 was quite small, and degraded. Even most of the free blacks were in the South.

If you read the private and public statements of the Republican leaders, their desire to keep the territories a white man's country is obvious. They stated it over and over. The proof of the pudding is Reconstruction. The U.S. government was giving away millions of acres of land in the West to corporations and immigrants. Not an acre went to the million landless families that they had just "freed." Their policy was to keep them in the South by giving them the vote and allowing them to help keep the Republicans in power. I have no doubt that John Willson's ancestors were fighting honorably for the Union, as were many others, and that some Southerners were motivated by a wish to prevent outside interference with slavery. But to think that the Northern war of conquest was motivated by benevolence is to buy into a pernicious mythology that has contributed greatly to the destruction of republican government.

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SINCE SEPTEMBER 11, our friend Scott McConnell, like most Americans, has been confused. Writing in his *Antiwar.com* column, *Ground Zero*, he describes his puzzled disappointment with the talks and conversation at the recent John Randolph Club. He came to Rockford, apparently expecting *Chronicles*' editors to deliver a neatly packaged response to the U.S. government's policy since September 11. Although he has not said so, the response he seems to desire is unequivocal opposition to the U.S. attack on Afghanistan coupled with a denunciation of Israeli aggression against the Palestinians. Instead, he was treated to a bewildering series of learned talks on Islamic aggression, Russian strategy, the evils of business monopolies, and America's cultural failure of nerve.

Some libertarians have privately expressed dissatisfaction with *Chronicles*' failure to speak out against war and our emphasis on the evils of Islamic terrorism. "Conservative" Republicans, on the other hand, have gleefully undertaken the task of demonizing all Muslims and have called for airstrikes against Baghdad, Damascus, and any other Arab capital that might pose a threat to Israeli expansion. So how can the editors of *Chronicles* simultaneously warn against Islam while opposing the expansion of Israel, or insist upon an "isolationist" foreign policy without declaring ourselves pacifists? I know it may be a hopeless task, but we are asking our readers to perform the mental equivalent of walking and chewing gum at the same time.

If Mr. McConnell had taken the time to ask, I would have explained to him what I think is the consensus of our editors. I will list our concerns in ascending order of importance.

The United States must work toward a just settlement of the ongoing crisis in the Middle East. We wish nothing but good to the peoples of Israel and Palestine, and we believe that the survival of both nations depends upon the creation of a real Palestinian state with defensible borders guaranteed by the United States, Russia, and the other countries of the Middle East. There is no doubt that the U.S. government's one-sided policy in the region has contributed to the hatred toward America that has boiled up out of the Islamic world.

The United States must end its drive for global hegemony. U.S. foreign policy since the end of the Cold War has been based on the conviction that, as the world's only remaining superpower, we can go it alone—flexing our muscles around the globe; breaking nations; starting insurrections; aiding Islamic terrorism in Europe, the Philippines, and Asia; and abusing and humiliating the Russians in their own sphere of interest. The attack on Afghanistan, which most of us regard as misconceived, excessive, and dangerous, is nonetheless different from U.S. campaigns against Iraq, Panama, and Yugoslavia. Two American cities were attacked by foreign terrorists, and although the case against Osama bin Laden and the Taliban has never been made convincingly, there is no doubt of their involvement in previous terrorist attacks against the United States. The war against the Taliban is not a simple case of U.S. imperialism, and although many of us deplore the conduct of the war and the immoral infliction of civilian casualties, we believe that it is foolish to equate our response to foreign aggression with unprovoked attacks on nations that have done little or nothing to harm the United States.

Our willingness to look clearly at the reality of an exceptional case does not mean that we have changed our general position. Quite apart from our disastrous policy in the Middle East, America's global strategy is making the world a more dangerous place for Americans, and in place of the neo-imperialism promoted by neoconservative Republican strategists, America should pursue a policy based on the American interest, which is something quite distinct from (indeed, opposed to) "benevolent global hegemony."

America must wake up to the real threat of Islam. Islam is not simply another non-Christian religion like Hinduism or Judaism. It is a religion that has defined itself, from its inception, as the enemy of Christianity, and for over a thousand years, Islamic states have aggressively attacked the Christian West on every front. Although the brilliant successes of the Western world during the past several centuries might have made it seem that the struggle with Islam is over, that opinion is not shared by many Muslims. Even if the United States arranged a just settlement of the Palestinian question, we would accomplish no more than a détente with Islam, not a lasting peace. Still, that détente is a goal to be pursued, both as just in itself *and* for the security of the American people, though it will not end the struggle.

In saying that we recognize Islam as the ancient and enduring enemy of our civilization, we are nonetheless opposed to any attempt to deprive Muslims of their human dignity or even to interfere with them in their traditional lands. While we do think it is time to begin limiting entrance into the United States of visitors and immigrants who come from cultural traditions openly hostile to our own, we wish only to live on terms of peace and justice with Muslim peoples. We want nothing more than for the United States to adopt its own equivalent of the wise Saudi policy that preserves the rights of Arabia's traditional religion.

There can be no talk of a "crusade" against Islam, because the elite classes of Europe and North America are completely unfit to take up the Cross. If we are asked to take part in a campaign of cultural genocide waged by the post-Christian, post-human anti-culture of the consumerist West against the traditional religious culture of Islam, we will adamantly refuse.

We must work toward the recreation of Christendom in North America and Europe. This has been and continues to be the primary goal of both *Chronicles* and The Rockford Institute. A people that thinks that dinner consists of eating a deli sandwich from Arby's while watching *Friends* is neither Christian nor civilized. A public that pays top dollar for tickets to see Barbra Streisand or Michael Jackson should probably have its collective eardrums punctured, and the business and political leaders who are spotted reading Tom Clancy on airplanes should not be allowed to vote in school-board elections or contribute money to their alma maters. The official America of TV, public schools, and pop culture is no longer part of Western civilization; it has become something more like a cultural concentration camp designed to produce servile consumers whose highest ambition is early retirement and escape from responsibility. Pacifists, political junkies, and activists who refuse to take part in the admittedly feeble efforts being made to

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restore civilization will remain part of the problem. They will be free to enjoy their saccharine-sweetened, artificially flavored gum, but they will never learn to walk.

—*Thomas Fleming*

RUSSIAN-AMERICAN RELATIONS, in mid-November, were potentially on the verge of a sea-change, at the conclusion of two days of smiles, handshakes, bear hugs, and the usual feel-goodisms we have come to expect of "summit meetings," especially from American presidents. (President George W. Bush, for instance, insisted that "the more I get to see" Russian President Vladimir Putin's "heart and soul," the more "I know we can work together.") Still, nothing concrete beyond cooperation in the "war on terror" had yet materialized.

Putin was friendly and warmer than his previous iceman image had indicated. He graciously went through the motions of fielding schoolchildren's questions during his visit to President Bush's home state of Texas and even offered a wisecrack or two. (When Bush told the former KGB operative that he should come to his ranch in summer to get to know the real Texas, Putin reportedly deadpanned, "So you want to come to Siberia in winter?"

Nevertheless, according to Russian observers, Putin and his entourage felt a bit uneasy at the end of the meetings. The two sides agreed to continue talks on the related issues of National Missile Defense and nuclear-arms reductions, disappointing the expectations of those who expected Putin's U.S. trip to yield a compromise allowing testing of certain missile-defense components together with deep cuts in nuclear weapons. (Bush was prepared to reduce the U.S. nuclear arsenal to about 2,000 warheads, while Putin proposed 1,500.) Bush characteristically noted that he still respected and liked Putin "as a person," even though they had failed to make a breakthrough on the complex arms-reduction/NMD issue. Putin was more reserved, merely stating that "we shall continue our discussions." The Russian president, not surprisingly, had wanted something in writing, while Bush, who apparently sees international negotiations as something like an extended episode of the *Oprah Winfrey Show*, opined that "We have a new form of cooperation . . . there is no need for agreements."

If Mr. Bush really wants to get in touch with President Putin's feelings, he should take a look at this proposal from his close personal friend's point of view: It is simply a matter of economics. The Russian cupboard, despite claims to the contrary, is nearly bare. Oil prices, the mainstay of the Russian budget, were falling in November, while Moscow was continuing its costly war in Chechnya and Putin was promising higher pay to military officers as part of his efforts to dampen the Defense Ministry's opposition to his talks with Bush. Already, the talk in Moscow was of debt relief, rather than the earlier Finance Ministry promises that Russia would pay down its substantial foreign debts on time. Russia simply cannot afford to maintain the arsenal it now has—and it would be hard-pressed to react in kind if the United States decided to rebuild a reduced-on-a-handshake nuclear arsenal.

But President Bush was all smiles, insisting that "We are writing history." That may be, but history, if he would bother to study it, has shown time and again that great powers cannot base their mutual relations on feelings or good intentions. Time is short. Russia desperately needs to be relieved of any threat of a new arms race. The United States needs an ally to help in its Afghanistan campaign. It is time for President Bush to send his inner Oprah to the green room and let the grown-ups make a deal.

—*Denis Petrov*

BIG GOVERNMENT—is it back? Well, I wouldn't put it *quite* that way. But September 11 has demonstrably changed, and may continue to change, some attitudes regarding the exercise of government power. Bombing the hell out of Afghanistan may be one of those enterprises for which Americans value the services of the national government. (There may be others; I just can't think of any right now.)

Well, certainly, we couldn't have turned the bombing over to the Heritage Foundation or the Fashion Institute of America—assuming they have interest in such an activity. The war-making power vests not only legitimately but logically in government. Who else manufactures B52 bombers and aircraft carriers?

The riposte could be: Fair enough, but legitimacy attaches to the *defense* of American soil as opposed to the aerial harrowing of somebody else's.

That's not an argument many Americans are prepared to latch onto right now. The rejoinder to the riposte is: We were attacked. And because we were attacked, our government has to do something about it. We can do nothing about it without sending in the bombers. (If alternatives exist, what are they? I'm listening . . .)

Anti-big-government Americans find themselves occupying familiar terrain—somewhere between a widely celebrated rock and a well-trodden hard place. This familiarity proceeds from experience with wars past. War, the quintessential governmental function, enlarges both the power and the reach of government. We saw this as long ago as the 1860's, with Mr. Lincoln's crackdowns on civil liberties and the institution of military conscription. But to see the country fully militarized, we had to wait until the 20th century: not only conscription but price controls, rationing, nationalization of the railroads, tax increases, new government bureaus to enforce new government rules. This was big, big government.

It shrank somewhat afterward. The railroads were denationalized; price controls died; and so on. At the same time, government had earned some points back on Main Street. After all, we won, didn't we? We wouldn't have won but for government, would we? *Quod erat demonstrandum*. Government programs commanded less automatic skepticism—or hostility—than had formerly been their wont. Indeed, plenty of government programs, even after the fighting, stayed right there in place. Income-tax-withholding, invented during World War II to speed collections, was among the less conspicuous but most baleful survivors. An editor for whom I used to work submitted, with pretty fair logic, that the witholding system immunized ordinary taxpayers to government growth. They ceased to notice how much they were paying, since what they were paying came out biweekly in small bits rather than in one enormous lump sum on April 15.

What effects the present war will have on our tolerance of big government can only be guessed at. Let's guess, then.

I would name two probable effects: generally broad public support for strenuous security measures in the face of international terrorism, and more frequent and more active interventions abroad. It won't be a happy time for noninterventionists.

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Even though, as I write, Osama bin Laden remains unapprehended and Kandahar holds out, it seems meet and right to think about the fallout from the presumable fall of Afghanistan. A sense of realism is highly to be recommended. We know (at least, I think we know) that between bombing and not bombing there was never the slightest choice. The not-bombing non-option, if adopted, would have been tantamount to a big friendly wave in Al Qaeda's direction: Hey, plenty of skyscrapers and airplanes left over here! Come get 'em! We won't bother you! (Just don't kill too many of us. Please.) Nor would the American people have put up with politicians who suggested such a craven course.

That's realism. But realism, too, is noticing that government is going to grow in the aftermath of September 11—*and preparing to do something about it.* Yes, we're going to defend American honor abroad, but the less "nation-building" we engage in, the better. Let's aim at *not* trying terrorists in military tribunals, by eliminating them through good intelligence and intelligent foreign policy that shrewdly appraises American allies and enemies. In the past, we sometimes couldn't tell the difference. Among the major gains of the Afghan aftermath may be the disposition to take another look at weak, waffling Saudi Arabia, and to ask, mayhap, how these stumblebums, oily as they are, so easily pull our chain.

The trajectory of government does lie upward. That hardly excuses the wise and honest from putting out restraining hands—or feet, when hands are fully occupied.

—*William Murchison*

AFTER SEPTEMBER 11, no foreigner can fully understand what it is like to live in America. Every day, we have to listen to our leaders telling us why the Constitution doesn't work any more. It is enough to make an honest conservative want to join the ACLU—almost. The ACLU will go all the way to protect terrorist groups from ethnic profiling, but it is strangely silent on the persecution of pro-life activists. The media have been dropping hints lately that the real culprits in the anthrax scare are probably straight, white, pro-life, right-wing males, and Republicans, who would scarcely have a party—much less control of the White House—without the support of the pro-life movement, are too demoralized to protect the civil liberties of anyone to the right of Denny Hastert.

Every time there is a national crisis caused by leftists and their principles, it is always used to crack down on the right and advance leftist principles. If, say, a communist shoots a president, we are treated to lengthy exposés of the right-wing conspiracy, followed by movie spoofs pretending that JFK was killed because of his principles (the humane and peace-loving Jack was just about to pull the plug on Vietnam!). Or, if there is an epidemic of illegitimacy among teenaged girls or a social disease like AIDS, it can never lead to a reevaluation of the amoral hedonism promoted by public schools, the media, and Planned Parenthood; no, it is the pretext for more sex education and more frank discussion of obscene acts on the evening news.

In this context, September 11 means that, now more than ever, some Republican congressmen are saying we need the President's missile-defense bailout of the munitions industry. But it is also time, say the Democrats, to crack down on the Christian gun-owners who hijack planes and fly them into public buildings, and we have to impose stringent restrictions on all Americans everywhere, and never, never suggest that Muslims *per se* might constitute a security threat. And finally, to ensure the safety of the flying public, we must continue to apply draconian rules on affirmative-action and minority rights, whether security is handled by private firms or by a government agency with even stricter affirmative-action guidelines. When Argenbright Security (infamous for letting the Nepalese illegal immigrant with seven knives and a stun gun through an O'Hare checkpoint) fired seven Muslim women a few years ago—four from the Sudan, a terrorist state according to our government—the EEOC made the firm rehire the women. According to Paul Sperry of WorldNetDaily, the EEOC complaint was "drafted by a lawyer for the Council on American-Islamic Relations, a Washington-based interest group that has spoken out in support of terrorist groups."

I had thought that the American press had sunk to an all-time low of vulgarity and servility in the Clinton years—the years of Monica and Kosovo—but I was wrong. They don't even like George W. Bush, yet they are more subservient to his administration than they ever were to Clinton's. I avoid the newspapers, but just when I was beginning to think it was safe to come out of hiding, I received faxes from "conservative" media pundits complaining about the disloyalty of the American press, and after five minutes of *The O'Reilly Factor*, I switch—for a reality check—to old movies like *The Manchurian Candidate* or *Invasion of the Body Snatchers.*

—*Thomas Fleming*

OBITER DICTA: With this issue, we have (almost) completed the subtle redesign of *Chronicles* that we began about a year ago. This month, we have introduced caricatures of all of our columnists (deftly drawn by our art director, **H. Ward Sterett**) and standardized the layout of the columns. In addition, we are finally acknowledging our foreign-affairs editor, **Srdja Trifkovic**, as the author of *Signs of the Times*, and we have renamed executive editor **Scott P. Richert**'s column *The Rockford Files*, freeing up the rubric "Letter From Rockford" to allow us to increase our coverage of our hometown. Please send your frank assessment of the changes to Polemics@Chronicles-Magazine.org.

Our cover and inside illustrations this month are provided by our art director, **H. Ward Sterett** of Roscoe, Illinois. Mr. Sterett received his B.F.A. from the University of Colorado and his M.F.A. from Northern Illinois University and attended the L'Abri Fellowship, where he studied the effect of Christianity on art. He currently works as a sculptor, painter, and printmaker in Roscoe.

Our first poet this month is **Charles Edward Eaton**, who lives in Chapel Hill, North Carolina. Mr. Eaton's 22nd book, *The Man From Buena Vista* (a collection of autobiographical and critical essays), appeared in November. *Between the Devil and the Deep Blue Sea*, his 17th collection of poetry, containing several poems from *Chronicles*, will be published in the fall of 2002. He is the recipient of the North Carolina Award for Literature, among other prizes, and was awarded an honorary Doctor of Literature degree by St. Andrews College.

Bradley R. Strahan, who teaches poetry at Georgetown University, is our second poet. The publisher of *Visions-International*, Mr. Strahan has had over 500 poems published is such journals as *America*, *Christian Century*, *Cross Currents*, the *Seattle Review*, the *Christian Science Monitor*, *First Things*, and the *Hollins Critic*. His latest book, *The Conjurer's Gallery*, was released last year by Crosscultural Communications.

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by Thomas Fleming

Abuse Your Illusions

Walter Block is a libertarian without guile, a theorist who refuses to confine his classical-liberal analysis to strictly economic questions. Liberty is liberty, he would argue, and value is value, whether we are deciding a question of zoning or a case of censorship. Honest man that he is, he opposes both zoning and censorship as acts of government infringement upon our liberties and as the forced substitution of other people's values for our own. In a recent online editorial, Professor Block offers us a rigorously libertarian (to be accurate, we should say "liberal") answer to the moral questions raised by stem-cell research.

Block is well known for defending the indefensible, and he takes the novel position that recycling fetal parts for research and medicine is morally acceptable, so long as the "parents" (i.e., those who supplied the genetic material) are unwilling to rear the child and there are no other takers for the fetus.

As a good libertarian, Block takes it as a given that we have no "positive obligations" to other people except not to harm them deliberately. Unborn babies, even from the point of fertilization, represent human life, but they are in the position of a wild cow that no one has "homesteaded"—i.e., domesticated and claimed ownership of. Therefore, if the parents choose not to rear the child and offer it up for adoption but find no one willing to assume the burden, they have the right to kill it—just as they would have the right to kill a born child.

Block's morally revolting conclusion is not the problem. Many libertarian arguments lead to repugnant conclusions about marriage, drug use, pornography, and common civility, and their conclusions do not always remain in the realm of speculative theory. It is what Block (and perhaps most libertarians) take for granted—the underlying assumptions—that are really horrifying. Let us begin with the obvious: the ease with which human beings are equated with animals, not to mention the unproved assumption that human relations can be reduced to "homesteading." In fact, the entire concept of homesteading requires us to regard human social life as consisting of unrelated individuals who find themselves on a frontier where there are no kinfolk, no laws, no customs—in other words, in a Lockean state of nature that has never existed.

Notice, too, the blithe indifference to facts of law in the treatment of his bovine metaphor. An animal coming out of nowhere is an uncommon experience, and children—whether the identity of mother and father is known—have two parents. In fact, the proper point of comparison is with calves that belong to the people who own the cow and the bull. Such calves are not at all open to homesteading, which would amount to rustling. In Ireland, the broad application of such a principle started a war, when St. Columcille refused to surrender a copy he had made of a biblical manuscript. The high king declared the calf went with the cow, but neither the saint nor his powerful clan agreed, and when the carnage ended, the horrified Columcille went off to Iona to found a monastery and save civilization.

But the principles of law and the facts of history are of only the slightest interest to libertarian theoreticians such as Walter Block and Hans-Hermann Hoppe, who are both to be applauded for their candor and for the rigor with which they have applied libertarian principles beyond the point of common sense. Timid ideologues grow fainthearted as they approach the abyss, but purists keep on marching until they have revealed what lies at the end of the road. Just as the 19th-century classical liberals, in pursuing the principle of radical individualism, led Europe and America straight to socialism, they are now leading us down the road to Soylent Green.

Libertarian theory, as Ludwig von Mises insisted, was a morally neutral science. Certain courses of action might well be regarded as suicidal, but "praxeology and economics do not tell a man whether he should preserve or abandon life." If some libertarians find the conclusions offensive, they might begin to reconsider the premises.

Most American conservatives (and many self-described libertarians) would say something like this: "I agree with the libertarian analysis of money and banking and economic liberty, but on social, cultural, and moral questions, I defend 'traditional moral values.'" This was, more or less, what was meant by "fusionism" in those distant ages so long ago when there was a conservative movement whose chief "theoretician" was Frank Meyer at *National Review*. Quite apart from the obvious problem that fusionism simply did not work (there are scarcely any fusionists under 60 years old), it is—or rather was—based on a false distinction. As Walter Block and other true liberals are fully aware, libertarian economics is only an application of libertarian social and moral theory. Mises makes the point emphatically in the introduction to *Human Action*, a work which is widely regarded as the libertarian "bible." Economics, says Mises, is the application to markets of "praxeology," a science of human behavior, based on the subjective theory of value "which converted the theory of market prices into a general theory of human choice."

If the general theory is false and evil, the economic version of it must be—however much we might want to believe otherwise—equally false and equally evil. Suppose we reached that conclusion—what then? Would we all become socialists or national mercantilists or Green agrarians? That is, apparently, what libertarians want us to believe: Either sign on to their ideology or be declared an enemy of human freedom. Such a fate, however, is reserved only for people who cling to the slender reed of classical liberalism as the sole support of a free society. People loved liberty, even economic liberty, long before Adam Smith (much less Ludwig von Mises) ever propounded his fallacies. Our search is for truth, not for a comforting ideology, and the things we love that are

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real and true—our wives and children, the freedom to buy, sell, and compete in the marketplace—cannot be defended with illusions.

Unfortunately, much of the liberals' credo is summed up in the Guns 'n' Roses album title, *Use Your Illusion*. Rather than taking up actual transactions between real human beings, liberals take their stand on abstract concepts like the Market, Freedom, and Value. "Freedom to do what?" we ask. "Freedom to choose," answers Professor Friedman. "Choose what?" we persist, like rude children. "Whatever you like," they answer (provided you do not harm anyone, though—as we see in Professor Block's case—they have a rather narrow construction of harm that can exclude the death of innocent people.) It comes down to a question of value, which (at least for adherents of the Austrian school) is entirely subjective. You like Greek vases; I like baseball cards. I would not give a nickel for your black-figure pot signed by Euphorion, and you would give less than that for an original Joe DiMaggio, unless it still had the bubble gum.

This theory of subjective valuation is, perhaps, the linchpin of the Austrian/libertarian approach, though not all liberals (particularly left-liberals such as John Rawls) have achieved the terrible simplicity of Ludwig von Mises, whose entire "science" of economics and praxeology is based on it. "Ultimate ends are ultimately given," says Mises, "they are purely subjective." Now, Mises might simply be uttering a fatuous tautology of the type, "I want what I want what I want . . . ," but since he is at pains to defend his position as a breakthrough in the history of thought, we have to assume that he thinks he is saying something important, not just about economics but about human nature.

The breakthrough seems to boil down to this: In assessing human behavior, we are not entitled to go beyond the fact of human actions, which are assumed always to be carried out rationally in the pursuit of what the individual wants. Some of what he wants and pursues might be self-destructive, but "the notions of abnormality and perversity . . . have no place in economics." At first glance, this seems to be the typical sophomore's reductionism that insists that man has no free will because there is a material cause for everything, to which the junior's usual response is to ask why materialist ideology is not subject to the same analysis. In the case of subjective valuation, the juniors might ask Mises why the theory of subjective valuation should not be viewed as merely a means for accomplishing Mises' own desire for money or prestige.

Mises might answer by arguing (as he does in *Human Action*) that human rationality, the mental mechanisms by which we achieve our desires, has evolved through natural selection to conform to the nature of reality—and that is the best answer a materialist can give. However, if Mises were really interested in human nature, as he says he is, it is strange that he gives no evidence of having studied history, biology, or anthropology. Even his psychology is of the crudest type—he quotes Locke as an authority.

The problem is that there are two Ludwig von Miseses: the Mises who claims to be offering a scientific account of human action (particularly in economic terms), and the Mises who fervently believes in the principles of 19th-century liberalism—minimal government, human individualism, the elimination of such obstacles to individual fulfillment as the Church, aristocracy, traditions, etc., the "right" to do as one chooses, even if society or other people regard it as "perverse." Amazingly, it turns out that Misesian methods of analysis—which are purely rational, objective, and scientific—confirm the liberals' value-free vision of society down to the last detail. His "philosophy," in other words, is actually propaganda in the service of ideology.

Mises' liberal bias is very clear whenever the subject of morals or religion comes up. "Ethical doctrines . . . intent upon establishing scales of value . . . claim for themselves the vocation of telling right from wrong." People who believe in right and wrong are obviously fools. So are Christians whose economic ideals, he advises us, are similar to Marx's. As indifferent to moral theology as he is to history, Mises conflates the teachings of Pope Pius XI, a reactionary as hostile to socialism as he was to liberalism, with those of Archbishop William Temple, a modernist as well as a liberal-socialist Anglican.

What really mattered was Mises' singleminded commitment to eliminate all objective judgments of value. This is the opposite of what all Christians and traditional conservatives believe, and it is by no means unfair to Mises to point out that his principles are entirely inconsistent with Christianity. When Russell Kirk complained that the Mt. Pèlerin Society, whose central figure was Mises' student Friedrich Hayek, taught dogmatic liberalism and opposed Christianity, the best that its defenders (George Stigler among them) could do was to cite the presence of several Christians in the group. This is a little like defending the Nazis from the charge of antisemitism on the grounds that there were a few Jews in the party.

Like Marxists and Freudians, liberals have created a closed system in which every question is answered before it is asked. If all moral, social, aesthetic, and political questions can be reduced to what an individual happens to prefer, then there is no objective basis for truth, beauty, and right. I think we all know where this gets us, because we are living in the amoral world that liberals created. Rejecting the really valuable contributions made by liberal economists and political analysts, we have completely accepted their childish and dangerous philosophy. Far from representing an innovative principle subversive of the regime, Mises' theory of subjective valuation is the highly respectable platitude on the lips of guidance counselors, therapists, and pornographers. It is the "Playboy philosophy" for college graduates.

It is not that there is no subjective aspect to value, but, if we step outside the hermetically sealed system, most of us acknowledge that much of what we value—food, shelter, clothing, weapons, tools, good health and good looks—are essential to survival and reproduction. Individuals who do not "value" food simply die and eliminate themselves from the discussion, and societies that fail to value weapons (or sex) quickly disappear. In crude terms—I am scarcely a better philosopher than Mises—value has what Darwinists would describe as an adaptive element.

Mises concedes this point only to trivialize it, but a student of human nature might construct a theory of value—and of money—out of sociobiological research. What is money, after all, but a measure of value, and if there is an adaptive significance to value, why could money not be treated as marking increments of adaptive success? X amount of gold might be the equivalent of so many children (or percentages of children) begotten or, more precisely, the units of caloric energy expended on the mating process. In lower species (such as hummingbirds), there is research that shows a male bird has to invest so much caloric

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energy into acquiring the food it needs to survive. The "surplus" value (i.e., the excess of energy) can be converted to mating and territorial behavior. Although human beings are almost infinitely more complicated than birds, a similar calculus might be developed that would firmly set material human values in a biological framework that would fulfill the liberal dream of reducing human life to the dimensions of the mathematical sciences. It would also, unfortunately, explode all the human fantasies based on illusions like "economic man" and expose the hollow pretensions of such libertarian slogans as "free markets/free minds."

A moderate liberal might retort: Very well, then, but even in the matter of food, clothing, and shelter, different people want different things. Of course they do, but how much of what they want is really based on individual preference? Hans drinks beer, and Pierre prefers wine: Is it an accident that the German is a beer-drinker, while the oenophile is French? Ah, says our moderate, but some Germans do drink wine. Yes, and many of them come from regions that historically produce good whites. If we take the case to the extreme, we shall have to concede that the tastes of the average American, for example, are nearly always determined by the general culture of America and by the regional or ethnic or religious subcultures to which he belongs. Only a few trivial points—a fondness for pink shirts or skinny neckties—can be attributed to his individual eccentricities or peculiar experiences. For the most part, then, what Mises regards as judgments of subjective valuation are really an expression of either natural necessity or broader social values. The individual's subjective contribution would seem to be negligible. The necessary conclusion to this line of reasoning would be to recover, in all our social, political, and economic thinking, a healthy balance between the autonomy of individuals and the stability of the society that actually creates those individuals. The libertarian project of setting individuals free from the constraints of families and communities could then be seen for what it is—as subversive of individual liberty itself as of society.

Liberals are fond of ridiculing the utopian projects of Marxists, who thought they could build a world without social classes, and of traditionalist conservatives, who are accused of yearning for the simplicity and community of a medieval social order. What they conveniently choose to ignore is the fact that the liberals had their chance. In the second half of the 19th century, liberalism was the dominant ideology of the West. Britain, the United States, Austria-Hungary (and, at times, even France and Germany) pursued the liberal agenda. They lowered tariffs, whittled away the privileges of the Church and the nobility, and gradually bled social institutions and moral traditions of their vitality. Britain undoubtedly prospered as a whole; the bourgeoisie became rich, and, for the most part, wages and working conditions for the lower classes improved.

Working men, nonetheless, were unimpressed. Torn up from their rural and regional roots, stripped of their allegiance to nobility and the Church, indoctrinated with the grim teachings of utilitarian and liberal philosophies that told them to look out for number one, the lower classes began turning to socialism before the end of the 19th century. Liberalism was dead in England before World War I and in America before 1932, and its doctrines were only to be revived, briefly and in adulterated form, in the years of Margaret Thatcher and Ronald Reagan, who have both been followed by socialists and state capitalists. Nothing could be more utopian and more naive than to believe that the failed liberal experiments of the past will be tried again in the near future. If Mrs. Thatcher, who regarded Hayek as a prophet, could not make it work, no one can.

Neither Thatcher nor Reagan were liberal dogmatists; both had their conservative sides, and both were willing to maintain a high level of socialism in their countries. Mises apart, it is hard to find a pure liberal. The greatest critics of liberal dogma in the glory years of the Victorian Age were themselves disgruntled liberals like Sir Henry Maine and Fitzjames Stephen, and even such radical individualists as John Stuart Mill, Albert Jay Nock, and the great Murray Rothbard were intellectual or social elitists who had to compartmentalize their beliefs: here, a radical commitment to individual liberty; there, a set of convictions about good manners, classical education, and moral responsibility. The really thoroughgoing liberals—such as William Godwin or Ayn Rand—were disgusting and unreliable people.

Economic liberty and political liberty are part of the good life to which many of us aspire, but they are not universal givens or precious jewels picked up by the first men living in a state of nature. They are the hard-won cultural achievements of the Greek and Roman, English and American political thinkers who discovered and expounded them and of the soldier-farmers who defended them. In other societies, freedom is as little prized as the principles of logic, and in abandoning the West's moral, social, and cultural traditions, liberals make it impossible either to defend the liberties we have left or to recover those we have lost, and so long as "conservatives" attempt to base their defense of liberty on liberal grounds, they will continue to fail as miserably as they have failed over the past 50 years.

Mises' most famous student came to understand part of the problem. Although he professed high moral standards, Friedrich Hayek had little problem, apparently, in dumping his wife of 23 years and abandoning his children. His Arkansas one-sided divorce (which was really an act of repudiation) drove Lionel Robbins, one of his closest friends and colleagues, to resign from the Mt. Pèlerin Society. In the years that followed his divorce, however, Hayek increasingly came to realize that economic liberty itself had to be rooted in some principle that lay beyond subjective value, and at the end of his life—and against the wishes of some of his libertarian friends (so one of them told me)—he published *The Fatal Conceit*, a book that permanently gives the lie to liberal amoralism. But even Hayek's search for the moral and cultural preconditions for economic liberty put the cart before the horse. The free market is not an end in itself but a part—albeit an important part—of the good life. Trapped in the constrictive mind of Enlightenment rationalism, Hayek could not solve the problem he set for himself, but his thought represents a major step away from the nihilism of 19th-century liberalism and toward the sane grasp of reality held out by those who seek a truth that lies beyond the whims of fashion and the promptings of our glands. c

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by Joe Sobran

Creeds and Values

The September 11 attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon may have jarred American self-confidence, caused coast-to-coast panic, and even (we shall see) ignited World War III, but so far they have failed to put a dent in multicultural etiquette. President Bush and other government spokesmen have been at pains to stress that we are not at war with Islam or Arabs in general and to discourage any negative thought, word, or deed toward Muslims within our borders. Islam is a "religion of peace," and all that. After all, aren't *all* religions, by definition, religions of peace? Aren't Muslims, when you come right down to it, just Unitarians with camels?

At the same time, Benjamin Netanyahu, Norman Podhoretz, Charles Krauthammer, George Will, and the rest of what Patrick Buchanan dubbed "Israel's Amen Corner" have suddenly adopted a whole new party line, in flat contradiction to the traditional one. The attacks, they say, had nothing whatever to do with the United States' support for Israel. The idea that there is any such connection is a "dangerous myth," according to one State Department, er, expert.

According to the new line, Arabs and other Muslims don't hate America for supporting Israel; they would hate America just as bitterly if Israel had never existed. It's the other way around: They hate Israel only in a secondary way, because of its association with America. If this is so, it would seem not that the United States should rethink its support for Israel, but that Israel, for its own safety, should rethink its close ties to the United States.

For years, we have been told that the Arabs hate Israel with insane intensity because it is a Jewish state, that they will never rest until they have driven every last Jew into the sea, that they admire Hitler and deny the holocaust, and so forth. Well, never mind all that. They are merely annoyed with Israel because of the "values" it shares with America—democracy, freedom, etc. Ignore Osama bin Laden's *fatwa* calling on Muslims to kill Americans and Jews; ignore hotheaded slogans like "Death to the Jews!" You can't believe anything a terrorist says.

In sum, religious differences—and the cultural differences stemming from them—aren't serious. All religions preach the same great truths, the virtues of peace and tolerance. We are all brothers under the skin. It is unfortunate, and paradoxical, that some fanatics have, from time to time, managed to wrest religion into the service of "hate," as a few pseudo-Muslims are doing now (and as Jerry Falwell would do if he could).

In multicultural cant, of course, "hate" is a broad concept. It can include even disapproval of certain sexual practices. And it does include the belief that religious doctrines matter—or, to paraphrase the endlessly repeated aphorism of Richard Weaver, that creeds have consequences. If you think your religion is "better"—truer—than other religions, you are intolerant and bigoted.

In other words, liberalism is the natural fruit and fulfillment of all religions. Nobody puts it quite that baldly, but that's what it comes to. I prefer to put it still another way: Multiculturalism is the negation of all cultures. It means that all cultural and religious distinctions are merely superficial.

Needless to say, this idea is as novel as it is preposterous. Until fairly recently, sane people took religion seriously. Set aside many centuries of religious wars, crusades, persecutions. Abraham Lincoln's political career was jeopardized early by his (earned) local reputation for freethinking. Al Smith's 1928 presidential candidacy showed that most Protestants wouldn't trust a Catholic in public office.

When John F. Kennedy became our first Catholic president in 1960, it proved chiefly that religious differences no longer mattered as much to voters, not that genuine tolerance had triumphed. Liberals trusted Kennedy because they knew he didn't take his own religion too seriously. Since the Second Vatican Council, we have learned that the same is true of much of the Catholic clergy and hierarchy.

It now comes as an unpleasant surprise to Americans to discover that our own liberal rot hasn't affected the Muslim world, which still takes religion seriously. It still believes that God has revealed himself to some men and not others; that some things are true and others are false; that some men are saved and all others, damned. The ecumenical spirit has not caught on in Mecca, or among the billion or so people from Morocco to Indonesia who still direct their daily prayers toward Mecca.

Did anyone see this coming? Yes. In 1938, Hilaire Belloc predicted that dormant Islam would someday revive and pose a serious challenge to the West, as it had done from the seventh to the 17th centuries. At the time, when modern Europeans were preparing for another bout of mutual slaughter, the backward Muslim world appeared to have dropped out of history. But Belloc argued that the Muslims were deficient only in science and weaponry, a gap that could be closed fairly quickly; whereas the Muslim world had more spiritual vigor than the West, which had lost its Christian faith.

In the new collision between faiths—Christian, Jewish, and Muslim—only the Christians (if you can even call them that anymore) are naive enough to believe that vague "values" matter more than real religions. One Christian conservative has also paraphrased Weaver in the vapid formula "Values have consequences." Many Muslims are ready to die for what they believe the Almighty actually said. How many Americans are ready to die for "values"? c

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What Makes for Real Prosperity?

The Small Businessman and Regulatory Discontent

by Stephen B. Presser

H. Ward Sterett

Supreme Court Justice Rufus Peckham put it best, in the *Trans-Missouri Freight Association* decision in 1897. Broadly interpreting the Sherman Antitrust Act as a means to rein in large economic organizations that had spun out of control, Peckham acknowledged that bigger businesses, because of economies of scale, could occasionally reduce prices to consumers. He went on to state that

> Trade or commerce under those circumstances may nevertheless be badly and unfortunately restrained by driving out of business the small dealers and worthy men whose lives have been spent therein, and who might be unable to readjust themselves to their altered surroundings. Mere reduction in the price of the commodity dealt in might be dearly paid for by the ruin of such a class.

Worse, it was in the power of any "combination of capital" in control of a commodity to raise the commodity's price after it had driven its smaller competitors out of business, and, even though those driven out of business by trusts and others might eventually find employment with them, this was not good for the nation. "[I]t is not for the real prosperity of any country," Peckham warned,

> that such changes should occur which result in transferring an independent business man, the head of his establishment, small though it might be, into a mere servant or agent of a corporation for selling the commodities which he once manufactured or dealt in, having no voice in shaping the business policy of the company and bound to obey orders issued by others.

There was some difficulty in applying Peckham's logic to the case at hand, involving the railroads, because his "Mom and Pop" business model might not have precisely fit the needs of capital-intensive intercontinental transportation of freight and passengers over tracks by steam locomotives, but the famously wooly-minded 19th century patriarchal judge had a point. His conception, essentially Jeffersonian in nature, of the yeoman local businessman—secure and independent, in command of his own modest farm, firm, or shop, interacting productively and morally with his similarly situated neighbors—remains idyllically appealing. Napoleon and Talleyrand derided the British as a "nation of shopkeepers," but that community-building aspect of the British is part of our heritage as well, and defending the small business man is a staple of American politics, if not American culture. So important is small business to the success of America that there is a whole federal agency, the Small Business Administration (SBA), with an annual budget of approximately $900 million and administering a loan portfolio of $45 billion, devoted to it. Unfortunately, the rest of the trillion-dollar federal government often operates in a manner that favors "big business" and accomplishes precisely what Peckham feared.

Each year, federal agencies issue more than 4,000 regulations, and many of these are expensive, if not ruinous, for small-business owners. Many of these regulations directly impact small businesses' bottom lines. The SBA estimates that the costs to small businesses of simply complying with the federal government's paperwork requirements, are, as Ohio Senator George V. Voinovich described it, "a staggering $5,100 per employee." Paul N. Gada, a writer for the Commerce Clearing House (a publisher of commercial reporters) observed in a re-

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cent internet piece that the Congress is aware of this danger, and has actually enacted two laws to deal with it, the Regulatory Flexibility Act of 1980 (RFA) and the Small Business Regulatory Enforcement Fairness Act of 1996 (SBREFA). Those acts "require federal agencies to examine the impact of their proposed and final rules on 'small entities' (small businesses, small governmental jurisdictions and small organizations)." While Gada observes that, "More specifically, federal agencies are required to examine whether a particular proposed regulation will have a 'significant economic impact on a substantial number of small entities' before finalizing it," he also notes the warning in an April 24, 2001, report from the Government Accounting Office (GAO) that "the laws intended to protect small businesses from overly burdensome federal agency rules are not working." This report makes clear that a continuing problem is that Congress, according to Gada, "never defined what it meant by 'significant economic impact' and 'substantial number of small entities.'" The hortatory statutes left it up to the individual federal agencies to interpret these terms, and the result is continued regulatory disaster for small business. It is no surprise that the RFA and the SBREFA have failed to do much, since the real problem is Congress itself. The federal regulatory process contains inherent biases against small businesses.

The most obvious bias toward big business can be found in the manner in which federal regulations and laws are passed. In the words of Otto von Bismarck's famous dictum: "To retain respect for sausages and laws, one must not watch them in the making." I claim no expertise with regard to meat products, but I have participated in the drafting of some legislation and proposed constitutional amendments, and, as you might expect, the process is heavily dominated by the parties purportedly regulated by the legislation, their lawyers, and their lobbyists. Many (if not most) bills that eventually become laws have been drafted by these people, not by the actual members of Congress, or even their staff. True, at some point the drafting wizards in the bowels of Congress will refine bills to make them do what their proponents want, but the substance of the legislation often takes form in offices on K Street, not in the halls of Congress. This means that those who cannot afford the lawyers, lobbyists, and public-relations firms for drafting purposes, or for the related ends of wining, dining, and persuading legislators, do not leave much of an imprint on legislation or regulation. Generally speaking, only large organizations can afford to hire this kind of representation in Washington, and while there are some groups that do lobby for the interests of small businessmen, they do not generally have the clout possessed by the hired guns for the more humongous firms. The lobbyists for big business will, of course, be more interested in protecting its interest than those of the smaller firms. Indeed, it is in the interests, generally, of the bigger firms to crush the smaller ones, to give the victors more flexibility to set prices in the market, especially as they acquire more and more monopoly power. This is what prompted our antitrust laws in the first place, and this is what Peckham was worried about in *Trans-Missouri*.

And even if large firms were not driving the process of legislation and regulation and crafting provisions in their interest, it is more likely that large firms will be able to absorb the costs of regulatory compliance than will small firms. Construction or modification required by the Americans with Disabilities Act (special stalls in bathrooms, ramps, elevators, and all the other accoutrements which may have to be specially crafted to accommodate wheelchairs), special appliances or workplace procedures mandated by the Occupational Safety and Hazards Administration (OSHA), or (especially burdensome for local governments and taxpayers) compliance with regulations issued by the Federal Emergency Management Administration (FEMA) can be crippling for the owner/managers of small businesses. In a large business, however, these costs can be passed on more easily to customers, or absorbed (often unwittingly) by shareholders of a publicly held concern. Indeed, when regulation crushes an industry, it is even easier for large firms to get federal bailouts, while the small firms, unable easily to assemble the wherewithal to seek relief, often find themselves in Chapter 11. We may see something like this happen if there is an airline bailout following the disastrous events of September 11. The great carriers (or some of them) will be bailed out and survive, but many of the weaker regional airlines, the smaller recreational flight concerns, and local airports will fold.

The very traits that Peckham understood to be necessary for the success of the yeoman small businessman are those that make it unlikely that he will seek aid from others in the way that big business routinely does. Corporate executives rarely see shame in asking for help from the federal government, or asking for special treatment, as their foibles can always be blamed on the previous executive in office. The separation of ownership and management in large organizations, the rise of a professional managerial class, and a revolving door that allows corporate officials to move from business to agencies of government, lobbying organizations, or even law firms, and in and out again repeatedly over their careers, can result in a lack of accountability and of real responsibility. In small businesses, where there is no separation of ownership and management, those running the businesses, typically related by close ties of friendship or family, feel keenly their successes and failures and, cherishing their independence, are less likely either to ask for handouts or to court a cozy relationship with governing authorities. For most small businessmen, opportunities for advancement do not involve revolving doors, and meaning in professional life comes from the economic and other successes of their enterprises. Thus, they are both psychologically and temperamentally disinclined to get themselves involved in the regulatory process, even if their single-minded devotion to their businesses or their professional training permitted them the time and resources to do so.

And if the perils of regulatory compliance were not daunting merely because of the ADA, OSHA, and FEMA, other machinations of the federal government have created a climate in which the small businessman finds himself at a disadvantage compared to his grander competitors. He cannot seek public financing without having to comply with a plethora of examinations and submissions to the Securities and Exchange Commission that require, at the very least, high priced lawyers and, often, expensive investment bankers and consultants to complete. Indeed, the onerous nature of the compliance process of the SEC, combined with the rise of large institutional investors, has led even the largest firms to eschew the public-financing process and has driven them to seek private financing, further drying up the opportunities for funding of small businesses from the private sector. Some small-scale high-technology start-ups still find it easy (all things being equal) to get financing from venture-capital firms, but most small businesses in this country are involved in manufacturing and services of a kind that are

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not so glamorous.

What should the federal government do to help the small businessman? Perhaps the answer is *as little as possible.* The federal government might consider the Hippocratic directive to "first, do no harm" and then abolish the thousands of regulations that do more harm then good, particularly to small businesses. In the last decade, the U.S. Supreme Court has begun, for the first time in more than 60 years, to reverse the kind of constitutional analysis that permitted the federal government to intrude in all areas of state economic life. In 1995, in *United States* v. *Lopez,* the Court ruled that the federal government could not prohibit firearms within 1,000 feet of any of the nation's schools, because education is supposed to be the job of the states. Similarly, in *United States* v. *Morrison* (1999), the Court tossed out some provisions in the federal Violence Against Women Act, that allowed prosecutions in federal courts, because basic enforcement of the criminal laws is supposed to be the preserve of state and local authorities. In like manner, the Court has recently begun to cut back on lawsuits brought against state officials and on unfunded federal mandates that conscript state officials into the enforcement of federal law. All of this has been labeled the Court's "New Federalism." It has been bemoaned by editorialists at the *New York Times,* and lamented in congressional hearings by those who believe that only the federal government is capable of protecting the rights of Americans and only increased federal legislation can do the trick. But the "New Federalism" has been cheered by those who understand that our Constitution wisely placed most of the powers of government in the state and local governments, which are closest to the people.

Perhaps it is time to remember Rufus Peckham and to balance the costs and benefits of our current regulatory environment more carefully. It may be that OSHA, the ADA, and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) enforce important American values, and that a safe and pollution-free workplace and the absence of discrimination against those who are physically challenged are laudable goals. It is by no means clear, however, that these goals, and many others of federal legislation, cannot better be accomplished by leaving the matter to the states, especially if enforcement at the federal level is fatal to "the small dealers and worthy men" who are vital to maintaining the quality of American life. "Enlightened" opinion in the 1950's, 60's, and 70's spurned the values of Babbitt and the Rotary, but as Americans rediscover the pleasures and virtues of life on Main Street and become more sensitive to the inadequacies of life on Wall Street, Madison Avenue, or Pennsylvania Avenue, this is changing. Even mainstream intellectuals are now starting to celebrate a return to community life, and maybe even they can understand that Peckham got it right. Peckham's "independent businessman," like Jefferson's independent yeoman, is crucially important to a republic that must inevitably rely on a citizenry willing to assume the responsibility of self-government and capable of understanding the Jeffersonian notion that a government big enough to provide for all of society's wants tends to destroy the means of its own sustenance. We have failed to recognize the devastating costs of compliance with federal regulation and, thus, to weigh the cost against the concrete benefits such regulation actually achieves. Whatever the benefits, the ruination of small business in America is too high a price to pay.

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Zebra

by Charles Edward Eaton

The opposition of the world is always here,
Point-blank, in your face, the oath, bruise, crushed limbs:
Do not expect the crocodile to shed a genuine tear.

Almost submerged, one amber eye half-open, he watches
yours and mine—
The poet waits on the leafy bank of the river:
Don't move until you know exactly how to write that line.

The yellow eye watches in the hazy, golden, city street—
You may have a penthouse, but his sight is long and
sharp,
Lurking in the half-suspicious eyes of nearly everyone
you meet.

Back to the pale youth on some brilliant day,
Taking notes as zebra, wildebeest, gazelle cross over:
The glistening poem is the one that got away.

Not a mark on it, that arching back, the beautiful striped
skin—
It is always a singling out, a majestic reverence if you will:
The bleeding corpse, the thundering herd, private
passions folding deep within.

It is a decorated, devious way to meet the world, disarm
The memory of jaws that slash and stitch the void:
As long as sunlight lasts, stand at the window and see if
golden stripes upon your skin have lost their charm.

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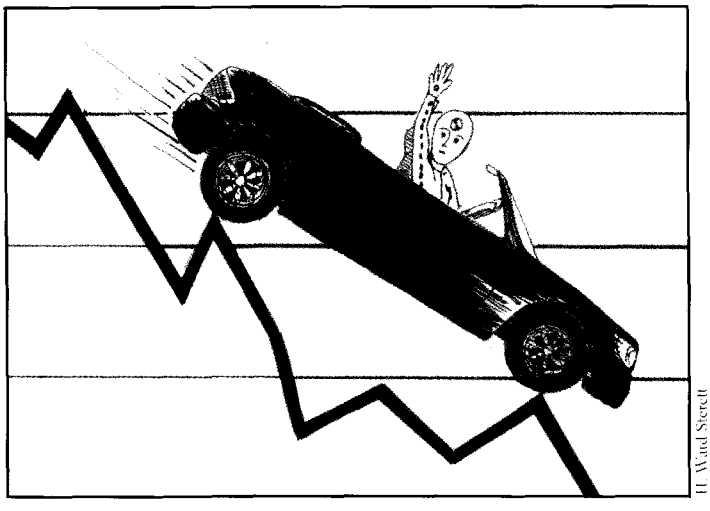
Economic Liberty and American Manufacturing

by Greg Kaza



William Jefferson Clinton mentioned the domestic auto and steel industries a mere seven times in the first two years of his presidency, according to the subject index of his presidential papers. After noting that the auto industry accounted for nearly six percent of the Gross National Product (GNP) in May 1993, President Clinton waited another 17 months before mentioning the sector, which employs more than three million Americans, again. Then he referred to the auto industry five times at the climax of the 1994 campaign. "I listened to them talking about regenerative brakes and fuel cells and ultra-capacitation," he said on October 18, 1994, describing a meeting with auto industry officials and Democratic politicians.

> You know, there wasn't a single one of those things on the three most important cars in my life—my '67 Mustang, my '63 Buick LeSabre, and my '52 Henry J. [Kaiser]. I could fix everything on those cars, except when the hydraulic brakes went out on the Henry J. Then I just shifted down into first gear and ran into the curb.

Unfortunately, the hydraulic brakes, linings, pads, and even rotors have gone out on the so-called New Economy, the greatest financial bubble in American history. This leveraged credit structure escaped its day of reckoning in the fall 1998 Long Term Capital Management scandal, but it continues to damage the manufacturing sector today by artificially increasing demand for dollar-denominated assets. The current downturn, unlike the nine previous postwar recessions, is deflationary, and it may turn out to be the worst downturn since the Great Depression. According to the Federal Reserve Board of Governors, industrial production has declined for 12 consecutive months, the longest contraction since the 1930's. Media pundits, especially neoconservatives, have repeatedly focused on stock-market losses while delegitimizing or ignoring the traumatic changes in auto and steel. Since past industrial downturns have always increased government regulation, the ongoing recession poses political challenges that threaten economic liberty.

One danger is that American workers could lose their faith in a free-enterprise system that has delivered a higher standard of living than most of the world enjoys. If their concerns are deemed illegitimate, workers could vote for a political solution that promises security but delivers more government regulation, economic interventionism, higher taxes, and a lower standard of living. The postwar era has been marked by an understanding that it is in the self-interest of both management and labor in the manufacturing sector to cooperate. That cooperation was based on the premise that the American economy needs a large and prosperous middle class to thrive. This arrangement worked for more than half a century and provided millions of workers and their families with middle-class prosperity. America is still the best place on Earth for workers, the longshoreman philosopher Eric Hoffer observed in *Reflections on the Human Condition*. Hoffer wrote about the wonders of capitalism but warned that the postindustrial age might be as savage as the preindustrial era. Too few on the right have heeded his warning.

President Clinton presided over the longest peacetime economic expansion in U.S. history, yet his papers suggest little experience, practical or theoretical, with the key manufacturing

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sectors of auto or steel. Arkansas ranked 49th among the states in *per capita* income when Mr. Clinton took office as governor in 1979 and remained there, barely ahead of Mississippi, a decade later. His one opportunity to attract an auto manufacturer to Arkansas—Mercedes-Benz—was squandered during his final gubernatorial term. Mr. Clinton stands in great contrast to former president Ronald Reagan, an ex-union leader who understood the regulatory pressures that the manufacturing sector faced.

Mr. Clinton's presidential papers contain only 25 references to the auto industry through December 31, 1999. Ronald Reagan spoke about the industry 65 times. Mr. Clinton had even less interest in domestic steel, which employed 521,000 workers in 1974 but fewer than 150,000 today. He discussed steel only eight times; President Reagan referred to steel on 39 occasions, while John F. Kennedy mentioned it 35 times in his abbreviated presidency.

Mr. Clinton's public remarks reflect this lack of experience. "I think we're going to see a big increase in the number of steel jobs," he predicted on July 26, 1993, "if we have flexibility and competitiveness," control health-care costs, and reduce tariffs. The domestic steel industry, in fact, shed more than 25 percent of its workforce in the 1990's. "You know the steel industry is booming in America today," Mr. Clinton declared on November 4, 1994, "partly because the auto industry is booming in America today." The Kaiser Mr. Clinton drove was built with steel, but the transition to using aluminum and plastics in the auto industry was already well under way in late 1994.

The real economy includes more than the stock market. Even by this yardstick, though, the trends are telling. USX, U.S. Steel's successor and the largest domestic steelmaker, was dropped from the Dow Jones Industrial Average in 1991. Its replacement? Disney. Bethlehem Steel, the second-largest domestic steelmaker, employed 165,000 workers as late as 1957. It was dropped from the Dow in 1997 and declared bankruptcy in October 2001. Nor is Bethlehem an isolated case. Since 1997, 25 American steel firms have filed for bankruptcy, most during Mr. Clinton's second term. Or consider the failed 1998 merger of German automaker Daimler-Benz and Chrysler, the third-largest U.S. automaker. More than $70 billion in market capitalization has been destroyed; the stock has lost more than 60 percent of its value.

President Reagan identified government regulation, such as the Corporate Average Fuel Economy (CAFE) standards, as the source of the auto industry's problems. "The industry must solve its own problems but the government must not unnecessarily hamper its efforts through excessive regulation and interference," he declared in 1981. "This nation has been suffering from regulation that is not within the bounds of reason, regulation that is neither fair nor moderate." In 1984, Mr. Reagan told Michigan UAW workers that "You've demonstrated when the chips are down what people can do working together freely, rather than at the dictates of some central planner or bureaucratic mandate of government." To the chagrin of some libertarians, President Reagan avoided union-bashing. The Teamsters endorsed him, and a new term, Reagan Democrats, was coined to describe his blue-collar supporters in the Midwest. He was the last Republican presidential candidate to win the industrial states of Michigan, Indiana, Wisconsin, Ohio, and Pennsylvania in an election.

The New Economy lauded by President Clinton centers on advanced technology, but it includes a flawed credit structure that makes it very different from the postwar economy, which was based on manufacturing. The American worker once saved at the credit union and bought a modest home or car with a mortgage or auto loan obtained through a community bank. Second mortgages, home-equity loans, car leases, and the subprime market all exploded in the past decade. These are market innovations that mask a reality few on the right are willing to admit: More blue-collar workers are forced to assume debt to maintain a middle-class lifestyle. Real income for working Americans grew from 1946 until the early 1970's, as such industrial giants as General Motors, Ford, and U.S. Steel created millions of jobs and widespread middle-class prosperity. AFL-CIO leader George Meany declared in 1955 that "American labor has never had it so good." Average weekly earnings of manufacturing workers increased 20 percent from 1953 to 1956, while inflation grew less than one percent under President Dwight D. Eisenhower.

By contrast, the New Economy is based on an ability of the credit structure to extend debt and leverage that would have been unimaginable a generation ago. In many respects, American manufacturing families of the 1950's and 1960's were more prosperous than their counterparts today, who save less and are more leveraged than at any time in the postwar era. The credit structure, including such government-sponsored enterprises as Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac, artificially increases demand for homes, mortgages, and refinancings. The derivatives employed by the country's largest financial institutions go beyond hedging risk (a legitimate purpose) to artificially expand credit for speculation. Manufacturing has collapsed as global demand for more U.S. dollars and dollar-denominated assets has risen. These financial institutions, considered "too big to fail," increase liquidity demands on the Federal Reserve in times of crisis. Few on the right understand these changes to the credit structure, let alone their impact on manufacturing.

Federal Reserve Board Chairman Alan Greenspan, in a December 5, 1996, speech widely criticized by neoconservatives and libertarians, warned about the implications of rising asset values. Mr. Greenspan asked, "But how do we know when irrational exuberance has unduly escalated asset values, which then become subject to unexpected and prolonged contractions as they have in Japan over the past decade?" Central bankers, Mr. Greenspan said, "need not be concerned if a collapsing financial asset bubble does not threaten to impair the real economy, its production, jobs, and price stability . . . But we should not underestimate or become complacent about the complexity of the interactions of asset markets and the economy."

Five years later, Mr. Greenspan's remarks seem remarkably prescient. Asset prices (equities and real estate) have continued to collapse in Japan; for the fourth time in a decade, the world's second-largest economy is in recession. From a peak of 38,915 in December 1989, the Nikkei 225 has declined nearly 75 percent, a decline comparable to the 65-percent drop in the tech-heavy NASDAQ since March 10, 2000. By any historical standard, the NASDAQ was trading at speculative valuations. The P/E ratio, which compares a company's stock price to its earnings, is a staple of securities analysis. In March 2000, the NASDAQ was trading at an astronomical 264 times earnings. Consider another fact: Twenty NASDAQ 100 firms had no earnings in summer 1999. That number grew to 30 in 2000 and 40 last summer. These are signs of speculative weakness, not funda-

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mental strength.

The United States is about to learn the answer to the second question raised by Chairman Greenspan: Do falling asset values impair real economy sectors such as manufacturing? President Clinton did not think so, declaring as he left office that the economy "remains strong . . . the response will continue." At the time, industrial production, an indicator used by the National Bureau of Economic Research to determine whether the economy is in recession, had already fallen four consecutive months. Today, industrial production has contracted for more than a year. Neoconservatives have said little about manufacturing's decline before or after the horrific September 11 terrorist attacks. They share Bill Clinton's notion that rising stock-market indexes and a burgeoning domestic service sector indicate a strong real economy.

The collapse of domestic stock-market indexes caught many on the political right by surprise. For years, they discounted fundamental securities analysis as too "old-fashioned" or "traditional." Few heeded older, wiser, and saner voices. "The fate of the world economy," ex-Fed Chairman Paul Volcker said in 1999, "is now totally dependent on the growth of the U.S. economy, which is dependent on the stock market, whose growth is dependent on about 50 stocks, half of which have never reported any earnings." New Economy advocates argue that rich equity valuations are justified. Stock prices rise and consumer spending (two thirds of GNP) increases when individuals feel "wealthier." But wealth effects based on the new metrics described by Mr. Volcker inevitably revert to their historic norms in recession.

New Economy supporters have argued that the business cycle has been repealed. The recession has ended that argument. The cycle is real; the Austrian School of Economics developed an explanation for its occurrence back in the 1920's. Octogenarian neo-Austrian Dr. Kurt Richebacher, former chief economist and managing partner at Germany's Dresdner Bank, warned in the late 1990's that all four elements of a bubble were present: money and credit expansion in excess of savings and GNP growth; inflationary pressures pushed into the future in asset prices; loose monetary policy; and excessive and unsustainable borrowing against soaring asset prices.

Those neoconservatives who discounted the business cycle and, therefore, suffered market losses from unwise choices have found a scapegoat: Alan Greenspan. Fox TV entertainer Bill O'Reilly, for example, blamed the recession on Mr. Greenspan's failure to cut interest rates in late 2000. "[T]he economic dam broke," he wrote, "and the waters of declining earnings flooded the stock market" (*www.WorldNetDaily.com*, May 10, 2001). In reality, the Fed eased in 1998 in response to the Long-Term Capital Management scandal, eased again in 1999 before Y2K, and tightened in 2000 to mop up. The NASDAQ, the Dow Jones Industrial Average, and the S&P 500 all started their plunge into bear-market territory in early, not late, 2000.

National Review has been vociferous in its criticism of Mr. Greenspan. The broad money supply (M3) grew at a blistering 13 percent rate through late October; Money of Zero Maturity (which includes currency, checking accounts, and money-market funds), grew at a high of 32 percent annualized post-September 11. The Fed has cut the intended discount rate from 6.5 percent to two percent this year. Yet NR accuses Mr. Greenspan of not inflating the money supply enough! The Fed cannot pump up the stock prices of firms with no earnings by increasing money-supply growth indefinitely. At some point, perhaps soon, the discount rate may near one percent.

Manufacturing workers have known for decades that the Fed is not omnipotent. The Fed added to the Great Depression by contracting the money supply; under Chairman Arthur Burns, it generated the double-digit inflation of the 1970's, which Mr. Volcker later cleaned up. Both periods produced great hardships for domestic auto and steel workers, who learned to plan for the inevitable recession. Today, there is an even greater need to explain the credit structure's shortcomings.

Long-Term Capital Management remains the best example of the new structure's failure, although the Mexican financial bailout of 1994 and the Asian currency crisis of 1997 are also good examples. When LTCM collapsed in the fall of 1998, it nearly took with it the largest New York financial institutions and European central banks, which had imprudently extended it excess credit. The leverage used by LTCM, greater than 20 to one on some trades, was employed to purchase derivatives that would increase in value if bond yield spreads reverted to historical norms. Instead, they increased after Russia's fall 1998 default and ruble devaluation. LTCM also bet the wrong way on merger arbitrage deals involving telecom firms like Ciena and Tellabs. Total losses were more than two billion dollars, but LTCM's real exposure was estimated at more than $40 billion, based on its derivatives book. The New York Fed brokered a controversial bailout, suggesting that "too big to fail" is more real than some libertarians ever imagined.

LTCM's customers, if not their finance professors, learned a bitter lesson that libertarians should consider: Derivatives can insure individual market participants against risk, but not the entire credit structure. Reliance on them is a sign of weakness, not strength. The LTCM bailout was corporate welfare at its very worst.

Arkansas politicians are fond of comparing their state favorably to Mississippi. No matter how bad conditions are in Arkansas, it is said that they are worse across Big Muddy. Governor Clinton never successfully pursued the goal of an auto plant, with its thousands of high-paying jobs, in Arkansas. Mercedes-Benz chose Alabama. But Mississippi, the last of six states bordering Arkansas to land an auto manufacturer, convinced Nissan to build a factory near Jackson. General Motors has plants in Texas, Oklahoma, Missouri, and Louisiana, and Saturn is considering a second plant in Tennessee. Mr. Clinton's legacy in Arkansas did not include high-paying manufacturing jobs for the middle class. Forty-nine percent of Arkansans today earn less than $21,000 annually. It would be unwise to pursue this legacy in other states.

Nor would it be prudent to overregulate manufacturing while extending the market-distorting credit structure with its insatiable appetite for debt and liquidity. The structure faced crises in 1994, 1997, and 1998. It is unstable; another crisis is inevitable. Conservatives understand that there cannot be political freedom without economic liberty; entrepreneurs must be free to take risks and profit from them. But they must also care about their workers and suffer their losses without seeking corporate welfare and special privileges from government. A market-distorting credit structure that rewards financial institutions with bailouts in times of crisis is not a paragon of free enterprise. It undermines both economic liberty and the family, which is the chief bulwark against an intrusive government.

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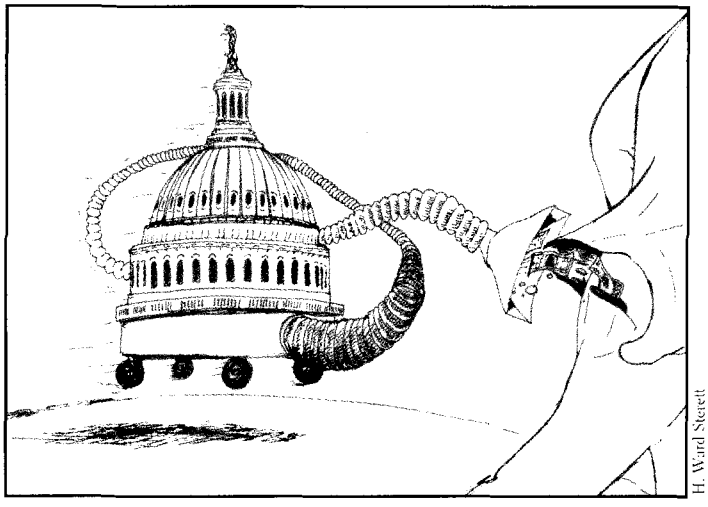
Diseconomies of Scale

Dismembering Leviathan

by Donald W. Livingston



"Free trade," like "free love," is a beguiling abstraction that hides more than it reveals. Absolute free trade would be an exchange of commodities between two people without the coercive intervention of a third party. But economic exchange is always embedded in a cultural landscape of noneconomic values, which impose restraints. Blue laws prevent trade on Sundays, medieval Christendom prohibited charging interest on money, and some think no decent society could legalize the sale of drugs or firearms. If someone disagrees with these restraints, it is because he rejects the *moral* ideals they express, not because he favors "free trade." Within the restrictions imposed by usury laws, trade flourished in medieval Europe; indeed, it gave rise to the practices we call "capitalism" today. Those who value liberty may seek to minimize these constraints, but economic relations cannot exist outside of noneconomic restraints.

The failure to understand this leads to a number of modern superstitions. One is the illusion that there are economic experts in the way there are experts in medicine or chemistry. But economics is not a predictive science, because it does not have deterministic laws. We act on the basis of our knowledge, and no one can predict future knowledge (to do so would be already to possess it), much less predict how people would react to this knowledge. No one, for example, predicted the stagflation of the late 1970's. So-called economic laws hold only as long as the shared noneconomic restraints obtain. The "iron law" of economics—that there cannot be full employment and low inflation—does not hold if, like the Romans, you are willing to live by tribute.

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Adam Smith correctly observed that it is from the self-interest of the butcher, baker, and brewer that we expect our dinner, not from their benevolence. Friedrich Hayek won a Nobel prize by refining Smith's argument to demonstrate that the planned economies of socialist and communist countries were doomed to failure because no central agency could ever possess the knowledge needed to achieve what a market can accomplish without planning. This solid insight into a part of social experience would be transmuted by some into a doctrine of the whole: the ideology of *laissez-faire* capitalism. As Michael Oakeshott observed, Hayek's plan to prevent planning is perhaps better than socialism, but it is still a centralized plan that could and did collapse into another modern superstition.

To understand this, we should ask a question that Hayek failed to ask: How did communist and national-socialist regimes come to be? They emerged out of a Europe whose social order had been shattered by World War I, a war that was largely the work of liberal regimes. Milton Friedman and others have praised the period from the Congress of Vienna in 1814 to 1914 as the century of *laissez faire* and, consequently, as the century with less war than any other in modern European history. But it was also the century of wars of unification and centralization, in which smaller political societies of all kinds were crushed into vast states. This period was a century of relative peace only if the concept of war is limited to conflicts between large-scale nation-states. But if we consider the wars of unification in Germany, Italy, the Brazilian war to suppress the secession of Sao Paulo, the American war to suppress the secession of the Southern states (the bloodiest war since the Thirty Years' War), and similar wars of unification elsewhere—not to mention global imperialism—we must conclude that it was one of the most violent centuries in European history.

The vast territorial states created by this runaway disposition to centralize justified themselves by claiming that they had

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cleared away petty, localist polities to make the world safe for cosmopolitan *laissez faire*. But any power strong enough to destroy the political independence of the German principalities or the Southern American states would not be content with merely playing the role of the "night-watchman state" of *laissez-faire* fantasy. Like everyone else, the night watchmen had ambitions, and with centralized power flooding in around them, they naturally graduated to estate management. When these oversized liberal leviathans collided in 1914, they left more corpses on the battlefield in four years than in the two preceding centuries of war in Europe. The old saw that liberal regimes are not disposed to war is true only if liberalism is viewed not as a concrete practice but as an abstract idea, since abstractions, of course, cannot do anything. It is no exaggeration to say that the 19th century was a Hundred Years' War against smaller polities of all kinds in favor of unification, centralization, and consolidation; and the 20th century was an Eighty Years' War between the gigantic leviathans created in the 19th century.

These disasters were the unintended long-term result of the disposition to centralize, first pursued with single-mindedness in the 19th century and justified in part by *laissez faire*. Centralization led to a spectacular increase in economic liberty for the centralizers, a massive loss of economic liberty for the smaller polities crushed into large-scale liberal states, and the elimination of most economic liberty in the new socialist and communist states that emerged in reaction to the spectacular mismanagement of power by liberal regimes. Lord Acton and John C. Calhoun warned their liberal contemporaries about the evils of ritualistic centralization, but no one listened. Their insights would later be given systematic shape in that school of economics known as "public choice theory," which is associated with Nobel Laureate James Buchanan.

Whereas Hayek, following Adam Smith, had explored the "spontaneous order" generated unintentionally by individuals pursuing their self-interest, Buchanan discovered a principle of what could be called "spontaneous disorder," generated unintentionally by the centralized governments required by vast-scale liberal states. Governments are disposed to grow at the expense of society by creating "public goods" that benefit their clientele. The only way to prevent this is by a constitutional system founded on the principle of a veto, including the ultimate veto: secession. (James Buchanan has urged that the European Union include in its treaties the right of a member state to secede.)

With this teaching, the 300-year adventure of Enlightenment liberalism comes full circle. Economic freedom may require not further unification but the division of liberal leviathans back into the smaller polities from whose destruction they violently emerged. Hayek, contemplating the clumsy leviathans of his time, observed that, in the future, liberty might best be preserved in small states. (Unfortunately, he never developed this insight.) This brings us to a question raised by Plato and Aristotle but largely ignored by modern political theorists: How large should a political order be?

Aristotle argued that everything in nature has a proper size, below which or beyond which it becomes dysfunctional. A cottage is not a small mansion, and a mansion is not a large cottage. The charm and beauty of both is lost when the size is out of scale. What is the human scale of political order? From Plato, Aristotle, and St. Augustine down to the present, there has been remarkable agreement regarding the optimal size. A city-state of 50,000 to 200,000 is all that is necessary to produce a flourishing culture. Some would push the limit to 500,000, but beyond that, nothing is gained. Experience confirms this. Athens (with 50,000) and Renaissance Florence (with 40,000) produced cultures that excelled in nearly every form of human endeavor and from which we still gain inspiration.

As the population of a city increases arithmetically, space increases geometrically. Problems of transportation, water, sanitation, crime, poverty, and corruption, which were easily handled on a human scale, increase geometrically as the population of a city moves into the millions. Vast bureaucracies are erected, often creating as many problems as they solve. Corruption and political alienation grow, and entire sections of the megalopolis (which can no longer be called a city in the traditional sense) are written off as blighted areas and resemble the results of carpet-bombing. A megalopolis in the millions, such as Sao Paulo (19 million) or New York (8 million), requires more resources *per capita* to maintain the monster than would be required for a city of human scale, leaving fewer resources for the cultural luxuries that are the reason for the polity in the first place.

Cities of this dysfunctional size appear only recently. The largest cities during the revolutionary period in America hovered at 30,000. New York did not gain 100,000 until 1820. The monster cities of the last 150 years are the creation of the centralized states in which they are embedded. Around 60 percent of Americans were on the farm in 1900; today, only around two percent remain. As the farmers disappeared, so did an entire order of villages and small towns. This shift did not occur merely because of "free choice" or "market forces" but because the rules were rigged to favor agribusiness and urbanization. The message from the Department of Agriculture in the 1950's was "Get big or get out."

Since the history of such small states as Athens and Florence prove that states of vast scale are not necessary for human flourishing, some other justification must be found for their size. For this purpose, another economic superstition has been useful, namely, that economic integration requires political integration. This argument was used to justify the big "unions" of the last two centuries: Great Britain, the nationalist union of France, the German federal union, the United States, the Soviet Union, and the European Union. But the scale of political integration has nothing to do with economic integration. Little Switzerland—one of the ten richest states in the world—is integrated into a global economy, but it is politically independent. It is not a member of the European Union or even of the United Nations. The city-state of Singapore is economically integrated with the world but has maintained political independence since seceding from the Malaysian federal union in 1965.

There is more economic freedom in small states because they must trade to survive and thus must allow fewer regulations on the economy. Large states contain a greater diversity of skills, labor, and resources, and thus they can afford to impose onerous regulations that benefit special-interest groups at the expense of others. The tangle of regulations emerging from the European Union centralizes the economy, reduces economic freedom and consumer choice, and benefits large-scale corporations that engineer the spirit-numbing uniformity of an increasingly mass culture.

The pursuit of economic liberty (what Hobbes called "commodious living") through political integration is the one constant theme in the three-century-old story of modern politics. It is time that we rethink the entire project. The monster states created by modernity are not necessary for economic or politi-

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cal freedom or the flourishing of culture; taking their history as a whole, they are responsible for spectacular losses of both. Aristotle is right: The presumption must be on behalf of states of human scale. Extensive political integration is good only for domination and war. While it is true that size is sometimes needed for defense, federations of small Greek city-states defeated the monster empire of Persia, federations of mere tribes defeated the Soviets in Afghanistan, and Vietnam defeated the United States. No country since Napoleon has thought it prudent to invade Switzerland and face her well-trained citizen army. Does anyone think that the large states of France, Germany, the Soviet Union, Italy, Japan, and Britain were safe places to live in the last century? Is the United States a safe place to live today? With a military presence in every corner of the globe, the American regime is suffering the same fate as all empires whose reach has extended beyond what prudence can peacefully hold.

We should pause to reflect on just how far the United States has moved beyond anything that could be called a human scale of political order. The Constitution was framed for three million people in 13 sovereign states. When the first Congress met in 1790, there was one representative for every 30,000. Since only property-holding white males could vote, that was close to Plato's ideal figure of around 5,000 voting citizens per state. By 1910, the U.S. population was 90 million, and Congress capped representation in the House at 435, where it remains today. Now, however, there are 285 million Americans, yielding a ratio of one representative for every 655,000. If we apply this ratio to 1790, there would have been only *five* members in the House of Representatives. Or to put it another way, if the ratio of the Framers existed today, there would be around 9,000 members in the House. A deliberating body of that size would be out of scale. But does that mean that the ratio of the Framers is out of scale, or that the union has simply grown too large?

Congress and the president now spend over two trillion dollars per year, about two thirds of the gross national product of Germany. This vast amount runs through the hands of only 435 representatives, 100 senators, and one president. Never has so much financial power been controlled by so few. But it gets worse: Nine unelected Supreme Court justices make major social policy for 285 million, and the executive branch, through its creation of "administrative law," has become a vast legislative body not answerable to the people in any meaningful sense.

Many during the founding generation wondered whether the Constitution they had formed could hold if the union grew too large. By 1860, it had swollen to some ten times its original size. It was probably too large by the 1830's; it was definitely too large by 1860; and it is certainly too large today. Lincoln made war on the seceding states on the grounds that they were not and never had been sovereign states. He said they should be thought of as counties in a unitary state. Although he was historically and legally wrong, that is how most people think of the states today. How large are these "counties"? If California were an independent country, its GNP would be the seventh largest in the world. Texas's GNP would be larger than that of Brazil, and Florida's larger than Australia's or Argentina's. Illinois and Ohio, taken together, would have a GNP larger than that of Canada. New York State would be the fifth-largest economy in Europe. These vast polities look like *countries*, not counties. Should they not be treated as such?

Florida, California, and Texas spend billions to cope with the effects of legal and illegal immigration, though they have no control over their own borders and virtually no control over immigration policy. Entire ways of life and traditions are melting away from forces over which the people of these states have no control. Vermont's population is 600,000. Its debt for the $500-billion savings-and-loan bailout debacle of the 1980's was $1.1 billion, even though it had no failed savings-and-loan associations. What value is there in continuing to prop up a union of this monstrous size? This does not necessarily mean that the union should be dissolved, for there are ample resources in the American federal tradition to justify states and local communities recalling, out of their own sovereignty, powers they have allowed the central government to usurp. But such recalling of jurisdiction requires a degree of civic virtue on the local and state level that no longer exists and can be restored only by seriously examining the value of the union itself.

Economists divide the union into five economic regions: the North, South, Midwest, West, and Pacific. If the states in these regions constituted independent unions, the smallest would have a GNP larger than France or Britain. The South, if Oklahoma is included, would have the second-largest GNP in the world, behind Japan. Each of these unions would be a significant player in the world. Even if they all had the same constitution, each would end up with a different interpretation of it. It is doubtful that these unions would have entered the European conflict that began in 1914, which would have reduced the scale of that horrible war. Without the prospect of American intervention, it was likely that the stalemate reached by 1915 would have led to a settlement. If so, there might have been no communism or Nazism, no World War II, and no Cold War. What happened did not have to happen. It is doubtful that these five unions would have concurred in the global gamesterism of the United States after World War II, even if they had united to fight the war. Each of five unions would be more inclined to mind its own business and to heed the advice of George Washington against the pursuit of glory in global entanglements. They likely would not have reached consensus on the wars in Korea, Vietnam, the Persian Gulf, or Serbia. Troops from this hemisphere might not today be in Afghanistan, Saudi Arabia, and elsewhere in an Islamic world that has long been allergic to a dominating Western presence. And if one or more of these unions had become aggressive and imposed its military around the world to protect the expansion of its commerce and culture, the terrorist blowback would have fallen on that union, not the others.

This is only a fantasy, not a suggestion for a political project; it may remind us, however, that there is a human scale to political order, that a great state is not necessarily a large one, and that a state can grow too large for its function. When that happens, it must be downsized toward a more human scale. Liberals are forever telling us that America is a country of *change*; they celebrate the rapid mobility of labor and capital and the massive influx of immigration, legal and illegal. We are told that we must get used to change and that the dissolution of traditional American society is the price we must pay for a freer and more universal society. We never notice that the change they celebrate is in the service of greater centralization on the part of the state and of corporations. Change always heads in the direction of gigantism—of the Tower of Babel. Freedom and human flourishing might require not more unity and centralization but more division, separation, and diversification. The day may not be far off when the centralizers, having flourished for three centuries, will have to learn to live with change. C

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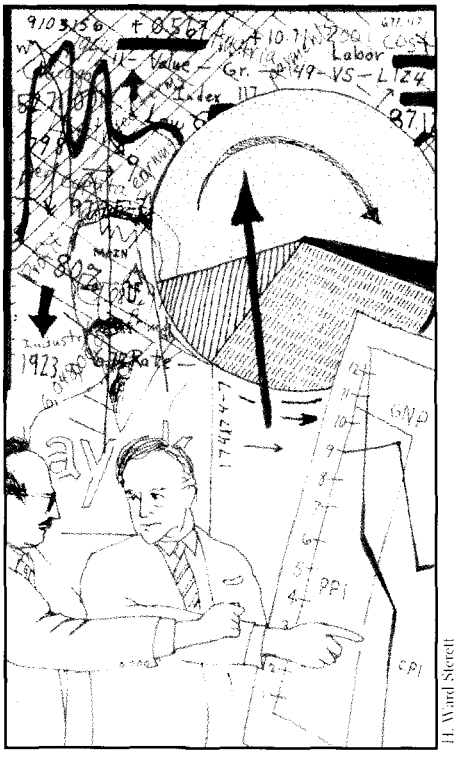
The Puzzler

by Peter G. Klein

"The market is the best garden."

—George Herbert

Friedrich Hayek: A Biography
by Alan Ebenstein
New York: Palgrave; 403 pp., $29.95



H. Ward Sterett

Lord Keynes' biographer Robert Skidelsky described Keynes' principal rival in the 1930's, Friedrich A. Hayek (1899-1992), as "the dominant intellectual influence of the last quarter of the twentieth century." Hayek's writings during the 1930's on business cycles would eventually bring him a Nobel Prize in economics, but he is best known for *The Road to Serfdom* (1944) and his contributions to social, political, and legal theory. Hayek is the most famous modern representative of the "Austrian" school of economics, the tradition founded in the 1870's by Carl Menger in Vienna and associated with Ludwig von Mises and Murray N. Rothbard.

Like Mises and Rothbard, Hayek is a major figure in the classical liberal, or libertarian revival, of the last three decades. Hayek's influence was particularly strong in Britain, where he spent much of his academic career and where his admirers included George Orwell, Winston Churchill, and Margaret Thatcher. (He was not, contrary to Clement Attlee's public claim, Churchill's chief economic advisor.) Shortly after becoming leader of the opposition in 1975, Mrs. Thatcher interrupted a Conservative Party gathering where a pragmatic, "middle way" approach to economic policy was proposed. "This," she said, holding up a copy of Hayek's *Constitution of Liberty* (1960), "is what we believe," slamming the book on the table.

This and other anecdotes are supplied in Alan Ebenstein's valuable biography, the first full-scale treatment of Hayek's life and work. A vast academic literature on Hayek's ideas and influence has emerged during the last 20 years or so, but little information has been available about his life and the genesis of his ideas (apart from a brief autobiographical fragment published in 1994 as *Hayek on Hayek*). Ebenstein sketches Hayek's personal journey, intellectual development, and influence in 41 short chapters arranged chronologically, drawing largely on a set of interviews given by Hayek from 1978 to 1986, as well as Ebenstein's own interviews of dozens of people who knew him. Unfortunately, Ebenstein's lack of full access to Hayek's personal papers sometimes limits the depth of his analysis.

Hayek's life spanned the 20th century, and he made his home in some of the great intellectual centers of the period. Born Friedrich August von Hayek in 1899 to a distinguished family of Viennese intellectuals, Hayek attended the University of Vienna, earning doctorates in 1921 and 1923. Hayek was strongly influenced by Mises, who encouraged his work and set him up as director of the Austrian Institute for Business Cycle Research. Hayek's academic writings earned him an invitation to lecture at the London School of Economics and Political Science, where he subsequently accepted the Tooke Chair in Economics and Statistics in 1931. Hayek spent 20 years at the LSE, an institution that came to rival Cambridge in influence in economics and public policy, before transferring to the University of Chicago in 1951. After ten years with the Committee on Social Thought at Chicago, Hayek moved to Freiburg, Germany, where he mostly lived until his death in 1992. He founded the Mont Pèlerin Society, the first scholarly association for free-market intellectuals, in 1947 and was instrumental in setting up the Institute of Economic Affairs, a London-based think tank that helped drive the Thatcher revolution.

Hayek's intellectual legacy is complex. Among mainstream economists, he is mainly known for *The Road to Serfdom* and his work on knowledge in the 1930's and 40's. Much of the knowledge necessary for running the economic system, Hayek contended, is in the form not of "scientific" or technical knowledge—the conscious awareness of the rules governing natural and social phenomena—but of "tacit" knowledge, the idiosyncratic, dispersed bits of understanding of "circumstances of time and place." This tacit knowledge is often not consciously

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known even to those who possess it and can never be communicated to a central authority. Decentralized market activity, however, generates a social order that is the product "of human action but not human design" (a phrase Hayek borrowed from Adam Smith's mentor, Adam Ferguson). This "spontaneous order" is a system that comes about through the independent actions of many individuals and produces overall benefits unintended and mostly unforeseen by those whose actions bring it about.

The "fatal conceit" of socialism, according to Hayek, is the failure to understand that this order cannot be replicated, let alone improved upon, by central direction of economic activity. From his work on the "knowledge problem," Hayek became one of the best-known critics of socialism, though his libertarianism, like his overall social outlook, was pragmatic. He has been sharply criticized by many libertarians for tolerating a surprising degree of government intervention in the economy; some say he was not a libertarian at all, but a right-wing social democrat.

Hayek's work on knowledge and competition is widely acknowledged by economists, though modern information theorists have typically disputed his conclusions. (*Whither Socialism?* by Joseph Stiglitz, one of the 2001 Nobel Laureates in economics, has been described as "a thinly disguised anti-Hayekian manifesto.") Business writers such as Tom Peters, coauthor of the best-selling *In Search of Excellence*, have been far more enthusiastic:

> My introduction to Hayek made me vow that I'd never again accede to the forces of order—the dogmatic strategic planners, the hierarchists, the central controllers who try to convince us that order and success are handmaidens.

(Hayek is the only economist included in *Wired* magazine's "Encyclopedia of the New Economy," which includes entries on information theory, knowledge management, positive feedback, and similar trendy items.)

Ebenstein's book ably summarizes Hayek's major contributions—a challenging task, as Hayek was (in his own characterization) a "puzzler" or "muddler" rather than a "master of his subject." Hayek lost interest in economic theory during the 1940's and, after moving to Chicago, began working almost exclusively on broader social and philosophical problems. As Ebenstein perceptively notes, the sustained economic growth of the postwar period was widely seen as rendering Hayek's work on business cycles obsolete, so economists were losing interest in him as well. Ebenstein does not think much of Hayek as a technical economist, and his treatment of his major economic works is uneven. (He describes Hayek as a "philosophical economist.") Surprisingly, the dominant economist in Ebenstein's story is not Hayek but Milton Friedman, another important libertarian and the foremost representative of the "Chicago School." Friedman and his Chicago colleagues have no use for the Austrian School's theory of capital, on which the Mises-Hayek theory of the business cycle is based, or for the general Austrian approach to economics. Ebenstein relies heavily on Friedman, quoting him repeatedly and at length on Hayek's alleged technical and methodological errors. He seems unaware that Friedman's own "monetarist" approach to macroeconomics ceased to be influential among professional economists at least a generation ago (Hayek's theory continues to generate interest), though Friedman remains important as a popularizer of libertarian ideas. Readers who are not followers of Friedman will be disappointed by Ebenstein's treatment of Hayek's economics.

Ebenstein is more careful when he turns to Hayek's writings on social, political, and legal theory. His discussions of Hayek's major works in social philosophy—*The Constitution of Liberty* (1960), *Law, Legislation, and Liberty* (1973-79), and *The Fatal Conceit* (1988)—are particularly insightful. Hayek placed enormous importance on the rule of law, where law is interpreted as "just rules of conduct," akin to customs and morals, rather than the legal positivist conception of law as legislation, the will of the sovereign. His later work emphasized the evolutionary character of these rules (working through group, not individual, selection). Clearly, Ebenstein regards these works as Hayek's most important intellectual contributions. Unfortunately, he does not show that Hayek's work in these areas has had much influence on mainstream political scientists, political philosophers, or legal theorists.

Still, Alan Ebenstein has performed a valuable service by helping to put Hayek's contributions in their intellectual and historical context, as well as by making these important ideas more accessible. As Hayek's influence continues to grow, this book will become increasingly useful to those seeking to understand him. c

The Princess Complains About the Unreliability of Fairy Tales

by Bradley R. Strahan

We start too young.
Shining surfaces
reveal fine cracks.
Clear light is lost
in grey densities.
An open sky is sealed
above our heads
as stars become ice points
in hard vacuum.

We hide tired eyes
and dream of toys
drowned in murky water.
We stare at opaque surfaces
but nothing there
reflects the light.
And when a frog appears,
green and gleaming,
he refuses to become
a prince.

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Retelling History

by E. Christian Kopff

Smiling Through the Cultural Catastrophe
by Jeffrey Hart
New Haven: Yale University Press;
288 pp., $26.95

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A few years ago, David Denby wrote about his experiences as a student in Humanities I-II, the "Great Books course," at Columbia College. In *Smiling Through the Cultural Catastrophe*, Dartmouth professor Jeffrey Hart "teaches," for the general reader, his own version of the class, the distillation of decades of teaching and reflecting on the story of Western civilization. By the time the reader has worked his way from Homer to F. Scott Fitzgerald, he has learned a great deal about important works of Western literature and has come to know a wise teacher with a sense of style, and a sense of humor, as well.

Undergraduates and older folk who remember their college days, even people without a college degree, will profit from Jeffrey Hart's learning and insight. They often find themselves today, like Dante at the beginning of his *Comedy*, wandering confused and afraid in a dark wood. Beatrice in heaven sent Dante a helper: not one of his friends, such as Guido Cavalcanti, or another poet, such as Arnaud Daniel; not even Thomas Aquinas, the great Italian philosopher who provided much of Dante's intellectual foundations. No; in Dante's hour of need, Beatrice sent Virgil, a damned pagan poet (if you will excuse the theologically exact description), because Dante needed to go back to the sources of his culture in order to get out of the forest, to be saved, and, last but not least, to finish his poem. Hart is our Virgil. He finds us confused and frightened in the dark wood of today's cultural catastrophe. He takes us by the hand and leads us back to the Great Books. On the way, he clears up difficulties and points out beautiful vistas and important truths.

For Jeffrey Hart, Western civilization is the result of the interaction between Greece and Israel. Although Hart follows Tertullian in talking about Athens and Jerusalem, he begins before wealth and power ever came to those two cities, with the accomplishments of two "epic heroes," Achilles and Moses. The paths these two break lead to Socrates and Jesus, who internalize and spiritualize the heroic vision. Socrates and Jesus, by their lives and deaths, open up a new order of understanding and human richness. For the Western civilization we know to come into existence, however, these two traditions must be united. Hart sees Saint Paul as the figure who creates the new intellectual and moral unity. The tension-filled interaction of these two traditions makes Western civilization the creative, dynamic, and sometimes destructive force the world has known for thousands of years.

Hart leads us on a series of explorations of this new creation: Saint Augustine, Dante (with pages on Virgil), Shakespeare, Moliere, Voltaire, Dostoyevsky, and F. Scott Fitzgerald. Each author provokes Hart to a series of reflections on literature, culture, and life, from which he digresses to reminisce about great teachers at Columbia and Dartmouth. A memorable story has Mark Van Doren telling Allen Ginsberg, who had been arrested in a getaway car with thieves, that it might be time for the young poet "to hear the clank of iron." (Lionel Trilling advised Ginsberg to plead insanity, which he did.) The New York police had been keeping their eye on Ginsberg ever since he hid the handsome Lucien Carr in his dorm room after Carr stabbed to death and threw into the Hudson River the obsessive homosexual drifter, David Kammerer, who had threatened to kill Carr's girlfriend if Carr would not have sex with him in Riverside Park. (These stories come up in Hart's discussion of Dostoyevsky's *Crime and Punishment*.) On a quieter level, Hart remembers his philosophy teacher at Dartmouth, the polymath Eugen Rosenstock-Huessy, who admonished his students, "History must be told."

Hart is brilliantly successful in telling the story of the great books he discusses. *Smiling Through the Cultural Catastrophe* is more a Columbia book than a Dartmouth one, however. Its *leitmotiv* is the liberal vision that inspired Humanities I-II from its origins after World War I and continued strong in the decades after World War II, when Hart taught the course. According to this vision, Western civilization mounts stage after stage, ever higher, until it reaches its acme in the Enlightenment:

> The great project of the Enlightenment . . . accomplished great and one hopes lasting things. The critical intelligence was mobilized against superstition. Absurdities were scorned. Economic matters were examined critically, as by Adam Smith and David Ricardo. The principles of representative government were worked out. . . . Throughout the world today, such representative government appears to be the only legitimate form and the only form consistent with modernization. Other forms—tribal, various modes of third world despotism—are ugly and likely residual. The authoritarian capitalism of China is a problematic experiment.

Frankly, our regime seems to be turning into "authoritarian capitalism"—an excellent phrase—rather than China developing into a consensual and constitutional government. History indicates that global free trade needs to be supported by an imperial system to survive for any length of time, whether the empire is Roman, English, American, or, someday perhaps, Chinese.

Hart's suave tones become shrill when he discusses the Enlightenment. "Absurdities were scorned." Oh, really? What about Jefferson's "All men are created equal"? La Mettrie's *L'homme machine* ("Man is a machine")? The French Revolution's worship of the goddess Reason? What beliefs of antiquity and the Middle Ages can approach these on the Absurdity Hit Parade? The Enlightenment arose from such absurdities, culminated in the Paris Terror and the Vendée massacres, and ended with the restoration of monarchy (as Burke had predicted), when Napoleon crowned himself emperor and codified the Roman civil law. Wasn't there a less bloody way to obtain the metric system?

Hart's Enlightenment texts are Moliere's *Misanthrope* and Voltaire's *Candide*. These are fine works of art, and Hart discourses on them eloquently. There is nothing here, however, to compare with Homer's *Iliad*, Virgil's *Aeneid*, Augustine's *Confessions*, Dante's *Comedy*, or Shakespeare's *Hamlet* and the wisdom Hart finds in them.

Speaking of absurdities, in discussing the world of the 17th and 18th centuries, Hart tells us that "progress in science and philosophy now rested on a new basis, experiment and logic." Hippocrates and

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Aristotle would be interested in hearing this. In fact, the great scientific movement of the 16th and 17th centuries was a very self-conscious return to the ideals and even the texts of ancient science. Copernicus was well aware that he was reviving the vision of Aristarchus of Samos. The theory of atoms was based on Gassendi's brilliant philological recovery of ancient Epicureanism. Similar cautionary remarks might be made concerning Hart's comments about the Enlightenment's opponents:

> It is important to see that even its most trenchant critics, from Swift and Burke through Dostoyevsky, have had to put such criticism in terms laid down by the Enlightenment itself. That is, they have had to argue their case, not merely assume it, and appeal to fact, reason, and experience.

The characters in Plato's dialogues did not have to wait for the Enlightenment to argue and debate over the range of human experience. Did Aristotle need the Enlightenment to appeal to fact, or Aquinas to appeal to reason, or Luther to appeal to experience? This is the progressivist party line of the brilliant faculty of Columbia's Humanities I-II, exemplified most clearly in Lionel Trilling's great work of cultural genocide, *The Liberal Imagination* (1950), where he proclaimed,

> In the United States at this time liberalism is not only the dominant but even the sole intellectual tradition. For it is the plain fact that nowadays there are no conservative or reactionary ideas in general circulation. . . . The conservative impulse and the reactionary impulse do not, with some isolated and ecclesiastical exceptions, express themselves in ideas but only in action or in irritable mental gestures which seek to resemble ideas.

This comment was published a few years after Richard M. Weaver's *Ideas Have Consequences* and C.S. Lewis's *Abolition of Man* appeared. Despite the ostensibly descriptive language, its intent was to legitimize an intellectual purge of conservative and traditionalist teachers and scholars. The result is today's p.c. university, with its oppressive climate of intellectual conformity and reign of terror against any and every dissent, no matter how mild or fainthearted.

Hart ends this beautifully written volume with the hope that "the ideology of multiculturalism," having been "subject to a devastating intellectual critique," is now coming to an end. If so, it is a case of our winning the argument while losing the war. The positions, not just of power but even of assistant and associate professor, are filled with the representatives of the liberal and communist left. Hart notes that students do not take multicultural courses unless compelled by requirements to do so. This is true, but the power and the will to introduce and enforce those requirements are there, and the conservative or traditionalist voices that might be raised against them have been excluded. Multiculturalism does not mean intellectual diversity.

"Is there any comfort to be found?" asked William Butler Yeats. One source is Jeffrey Hart's *Smiling Through the Cultural Catastrophe*, where a wise and sophisticated old-fashioned liberal recalls us to the cultural heritage that was the basis of our freedom and prosperity in the past and can be so again, if we will listen and pay attention. "History must be told." Few tell it better than Jeffrey Hart.

E. Christian Kopff is a professor of Greek and Latin at the University of Colorado in Boulder, and the author of The Devil Knows Latin: Why America Needs the Classical Tradition *(ISI Books).*

World Without End, Amen

by Jeremy Lott

A World Made New: Eleanor Roosevelt and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights
by Mary Ann Glendon
New York: Random House;
333 pp., $25.95

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Every night before bed, Eleanor Roosevelt—first lady, feminist, and the spirit Hillary Clinton most wants to contact in the Great Beyond—knelt beside her bed and prayed her improvised prayer:

> Our Father, who has set a restlessness in our hearts and made us all seekers after that which we can never fully find, forbid us to be satisfied with what we make of life. Draw us from base content and set our eyes on far-off goals . . .

It continues, but that excerpt should be enough for you to get the idea. Franklin Roosevelt, less of a theologian, was rumored to have prayed "Dear God, please make Eleanor tired," according to Mary Ann Glendon, Harvard law professor, in this attempt at vindicating of Mrs. Roosevelt and her grand achievement, the United Nations' Universal Declaration of Human Rights. A less sympathetic biographer might have included the popular, more pointed dismissal: "If he could stand up, he'd knock her down."

The genesis of this book, Glendon writes, was the misinterpretation, misunderstanding, misuse, and abuse that she thinks the declaration has fallen prey to since it was approved, with no dissenting votes, by the General Assembly of the United Nations in 1948. Multiculturalists and the parties of resentment from Third World countries charge that it represents the unjustified imposition of Western morality. Realpolitikers doubt the efficacy of a nonbinding declaration of principles. Libertarians and classical liberals shudder at its conflation of positive and negative rights. Theists blanch at its intentional lack of reference to a creator. All, the Harvard professor believes, are sorely mistaken (more or less).

The first and loudest charge—that the document amounts to an imposition of Western thought and morality—is the one Glendon takes the greatest pains to refute. With regard to the question of whether "rights" can actually be considered universal, she notes that a subcommittee of the United Nations invited comment from representatives of all of the world's great religious traditions and cultures. Glendon finds their responses, which she thinks suggest that most cultures share many of the same beliefs with regard to civil rights (even if they had remained unexpressed in the terms of the fairly recent advent of "rights language"), to be "encouraging."

Certain cultures or nations were not, she claims, purposely shut out of the discussion. The people who shaped the declaration included Greek Orthodox Arab Lebonese philosophy professor Charles Malik; René Cassin, Frenchman and

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secular Jew; Peng-chun Chang, playwright and representative of noncommunist Confucionist China; Alexei Pavlov, nephew of Ivan Petrovich Pavlov, of the Soviet Union; Hansa Mehta of Hindu India; and Eleanor Roosevelt herself, liberal, universalist, woman of causes. Further, the declaration was vigorously debated and then approved—or allowed to pass unobstructed—by representatives of European, Latin American, African, Muslim, Asian, and North American nations.

In the end, Glendon throws up her rhetorical hands and wonders aloud what in the world the multicultis could be talking about:

> To accept the claim that meaningful cross-cultural discussions of freedom and dignity are impossible is to give up on the hope that the political fate of humanity can be affected by reason and choice.

It also, she further charges, gives the last word to the Athenians as they were about to invade the peaceful island of Melos. Their response to the diplomats from Melos still resonates: "You know as well as we do that right, as the world goes, is only in question between equals in power, while the strong do what they can and the weak suffer what they must."

This is wonderfully crafted—perhaps even nominally persuasive—rhetoric, but I have to wonder if the back story of *A World Made New* bears out Glendon's contention that the declaration speaks up for the meaningful rights of all. The arguments were set in the context of an emerging Cold War between America and the Soviet Union, roughly "equals in power" at the time. While other countries and cultures made substantial contribution to the conference, it is highly unlikely that the declaration would have had any force—in terms of practical politics—if either giant had walked out. Thus, the United States or the Soviet Union could have effectively scuttled the whole process at will. No extra points will be awarded to those who determine which side exploited this arrangement more often.

At several points in the drafting of the declaration, the Soviet Union successfully pushed to water down or muddle the document in order to accommodate its own despotism or to come up with rhetorical trump cards to play against America. Language referring to a "creator" and even "nature" was stricken from the preamble as being insufficiently secular and, therefore, incompletely universal. The word "private" was removed from the property clause to avoid offending countries with total state ownership of the means of production. Any mention of a people's right to overthrow its despotic regime was left out. The United States became the only country to vote against a provision that would tie salaries to family size. And Soviet representatives and their puppet states proved so contentious that even a soul as accommodating as Mrs. Roosevelt at one point found it necessary to speak out:

> I think the time has come for some very straight thinking among us all. The ultimate objective that we have is to create better understanding among us all, and I will acknowledge this is going to be difficult. And I will give you the reason why. I have never heard a representative of any of the USSR bloc acknowledge that in any way their government can be wrong.

One argument Glendon does not take seriously is that the compromises necessary to give birth to the declaration ended up hatching something closer in theory to "liberty, equality, and fraternity" than "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness." In the book's most maddening undeveloped aside, she writes

> Iraq's A. Abadi argued, as philosopher Robert Nozick would years later, that it is logically impossible for human beings to be both free and equal since inequality is the inevitable result when people are free to develop all their latent talents.

Yes? And? The text cries out for explanation.

And yet, as Mrs. Roosevelt's words demonstrate, though the declaration is full of compromises and muddled thinking and its official guardian, the U.N. Commission on Human Rights, recently replaced the United States with such morally pristine nations as the Sudan, there may have been some value in it. The Soviets were too embarrassed, finally, to obstruct a document that extolled such basic freedoms as untrammeled speech and movement. They sat there silent and stone-faced as civilized nations affirmed these as basic decencies below which only barbarians would sink, and were shamed by it. Further, the declaration proved to be a bludgeon America would employ successfully to exact many excuses and not a few concessions from the barbarians.

Though that is a victory of sorts, it represents a strategic one "between equals in power" and not the sort of which I suspect Professor Glendon would approve.

Jeremy Lott is the senior editor of Spintech Magazine.

Mexican Mosques, Brazilian Buddhists

by Philip Jenkins

A New Religious America: How a "Christian Country" Has Now Become the World's Most Religiously Diverse Nation
by Diana Eck
San Francisco: Harper; 404 pp., $27.00

◆

Diana Eck has produced some of the most valuable modern work on Indian religion. Her best-known book is probably *Banaras* (Columbia University Press, 1998), a wonderfully detailed examination of the sacred geography of the holy city that Westerners used to call "Benares." That book was so good because of Eck's ability to understand the symbolic relationship between temples and shrines. Eck has the great gift of being able to see and to connect. In *A New Religious America*, however, only half of these abilities are displayed. She tells us a huge amount about the practice of once-foreign religions in North America—religions such as Islam, Buddhism, and Hinduism—but I do not believe she is seeing anything like the whole picture: Concentrating on the individual trees prevents her from seeing the sacred wood.

Most of *A New Religious America* represents Eck's explorations of the growing networks of "other" religions in the United States, accounts of visits to mosques in Detroit or Sikh *gurdwaras* in California. These stories are well told; they raise important questions about the religious and

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political assumptions of America in the coming century. From the simplest non-spiritual angle, we face such issues as how American Hindus by Muslims will vote in years to come. With their emphasis on business, family, and tradition, they seem like natural conservative Republicans, and a case has been made that the 2000 presidential election was decided by effective bloc voting of Muslims in key American states. Yet how will these "natural" alliances be affected by foreign-policy issues or by the negative effects of anti-immigration efforts? In the future, will some U.S. politicians have to treat the Palestinian cause as a sacred icon, just as their predecessors had to affect unquestioning loyalty to Irish unity or the state of Israel? Eck provides a useful guide to the emerging religious structures, to the generational conflicts dividing first- and second-generation immigrant groups, and to the ambiguous relationship between immigrants and natives.

A New Religious America is well worth reading, which makes it all the more unfortunate that its basic hypothesis is simply wrong. Just how far off base it is may be exaggerated by the advertising campaign orchestrated by Harper, which repeatedly punches home a simplistic core message that goes roughly as follows: America was once a "Christian country" (note the quotes), but that has changed. Now, we have true diversity, Christian hegemony is over, and at last we have pluralism, *Dis gratias!* (The distaste for Christianity in this tirade is overwhelmingly obvious.) We are experiencing a social and religious revolution, which makes Eck's book "eye-opening." According to religion scholar Wade Clark Roof, the book "shatters our old preconceptions." Harper's publicity materials stress the question, "Is the idea that ours is a fundamentally Christian nation fast becoming a myth?" (Obvious answer: You betcha!) A heavy-handed political message also emerges here: Why on earth do you want prayer in schools? Do you not realize an imam might be leading it? Best to keep with strict public secularism and the absolute separation of church and state. To claim otherwise is "strident" and bigoted.

What is wrong with Eck's idea should be obvious to anyone who has ever walked an American city in quest of a Mexican mosque or Brazilian Buddhists. Such might conceivably exist, but they are rare beside the glaringly obvious immigrant Christian presence. Yes, the 1965 Immigration Reform Act transformed the ethnic character of the American population and ensured that the old white-black dichotomy was replaced by a polyglot and polychrome reality, with millions of new immigrants from Africa, Asia, and Latin America. But the vast majority of those came from Christian countries or were converted to Christianity on these shores. In consequence, non-Christian religions account for the faith of only a small proportion of Americans—at most, five percent or so—and that number is not going to increase significantly over the coming century. (It might well decline, in fact.) Moreover, thanks to mass immigration, the "Christianity" of the great majority of Americans will probably change in character, coming to place new emphasis on fideistic, charismatic, and even fundamentalist approaches. America is becoming *more* Christian, not less so.

Latin Americans provide the most obvious aspect of this change. Virtually all Latinos come from strongly Christian cultures, though it is anyone's guess whether future generations will be predominantly Catholic or Pentecostal. But Asians, too, have very substantial Christian communities. Just inspect the Chinese or Korean sections of a major American city, the sort that Eck visited to find her Buddhist temples and Shinto shrines. What she does not mention is the preponderance of Christian churches in those same cities, the dozens of congregations with some Asian ethnic title, such as "Chinese Pentecostal" or "Korean Baptist." Nor does she take into account services in ethnic languages offered by mainstream Catholic or Protestant churches, or people of Asian descent who attend mainstream Christian services in the English language.

African immigrant Christianity is more potent still. African churches have targeted the United States for evangelization, and their networks of congregations are spreading. With its 80,000 Nigerian residents, Houston plays a pivotal role in these schemes. The Redeemed Christian Church of God, which grows from Nigerian roots, now boasts "parishes in Dallas, Tallahassee, Houston, New York, Washington, and Chicago, Atlanta, Detroit, Maryland, etc."

So what does Eck do with this ferment of emerging Christianity? In short, she ignores it. Pentecostalism, the world's fastest-growing religious movement, rates just two brief references in her book. Many more pages are devoted to Catholicism, but on examination, these mainly focus on the historical experience of European immigrants in overcoming religious discrimination as a hopeful precedent for today's Muslims and Buddhists. I do not think Diana Eck despises Christians, of whatever color: She just cannot see them. Churches, for her, are the commonplace, boring things you pass *en route* to the fascinating *Zen-do*, where you can find *real* religion.

Philip Jenkins is the author, most recently, of Hidden Gospels: How the Search for Jesus Lost Its Way *(Oxford University Press).*

Hold the Gush

by Jeffrey Meyers

What Lips My Lips Have Kissed: The Loves and Love Poems of Edna St. Vincent Millay
by Daniel Mark Epstein
New York: Henry Holt; 300 pp., $26.00

◆

Like Virginia Woolf and Mary McCarthy, Rupert Brooke and Bruce Chatwin, Edna St. Vincent Millay's striking appearance greatly enhanced her literary reputation. Readers were drawn to her poetry by her good looks and notorious sexual behavior. When she lost her health and beauty and became an alcoholic and a drug addict, she lost her following as well. After great pain came a greater pain. Millay (1892-1950), the most popular poet of her time, has fallen—like the painters Salvator Rosa and J.-B. Greuze, the composers Salieri and Meyerbeer, the writers Chatterton and Longfellow—into oblivion.

Daniel Mark Epstein, an enthusiast for Millay (in contrast to his ponderous rival biographer, Nancy Milford) narrates his story in a mercifully brief compass. He is good on Millay's flamboyant lesbianism at Vassar, which evoked paeans to her "secret circles and folds"; her affair with writer Floyd Dell; her morphine habit and heavy drinking. She once passed out in a Pullman car and awoke, a few hours later, undressed and wonder-

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ing whether the conductor had had his way with her. She died from falling drunkenly down the stairs and breaking her neck.

But Epstein, long on quotation and short on analysis, fails to substantiate the great claims he makes for her work. Her poetry lacks intellectual content, has mechanically predictable rhymes (fear-year, fall-call), and often descends into the romantic gush of an aging *ingénue*: "I am in love with him to whom a hyacinth is dearer / Than I shall ever be dear." Epstein absurdly compares this stuff to the brilliantly complex poems of Donne, to the elegies of Milton and Shelley, to the visionary tradition from Blake to Rimbaud, to Pascal's "geometry of belief" and Kierkegaard's existential terror.

When you place Millay's lines next to the truly great poetry from which they are derived, her mediocrity becomes obvious:

> then you must speak
> Of one that loved not wisely but
> too well [Shakespeare, *Othello*].
>
> I had not come so running at the
> call
> Of one who loves me little, if at all
> [Millay].
>
> The grave's a fine and private
> place,
> But none, I think, do there em-
> brace [Marvell, "To His Coy
> Mistress"].
>
> And scarce the friendly voice or
> face,
> A grave is such a quiet place [Mil-
> lay].
>
> Milton! thou shouldst be living at
> this hour:
> England hath need of thee
> [Wordsworth, "London, 1802"].
>
> You who have stood behind them
> to this hour,
> move strong behind them now
> [Millay].
>
> Do not go gentle into that good
> night . . .
> Rage, rage against the dying of the
> light [Dylan Thomas, "Do Not
> Go Gentle"].
>
> I am not willing you should go
> Into the earth where Helen went
> [Millay].

Epstein calls *The King's Henchman*, an obscure and now forgotten work on which Millay collaborated, "an important event in the history of opera." And, claiming Millay's love letters "rival the greatest love letters of all time," he quotes the bogus Keatsian line: "an enchanted sickness comes over me as if I had drunk a witch's philtre."

Epstein, himself a poet, frequently lapses into cliché: "The letters from Camden came *fast and furious*. . . . Her mother and sisters were *frantic without her*, could not understand *why on earth* they had heard nothing from her." He is extremely repetitious, mentioning at least a dozen times that Millay had red hair. He also offers many trivial and boring details while neglecting a number of crucial points: the beliefs of Millay's Congregational Church, her friendships with the poet-suicide Sara Teasdale and composer Deems Taylor. He dismisses her round-the-world trip in two sentences (names of ports will not do) but spends half a page on the clothes she wore during a poetry reading.

Everyone in Millay's circle, except Edmund Wilson, was third rate, and it is difficult to get excited by poet-lovers like George Dillon and Arthur Davison Ficke (beware of authors with three names). Epstein tries desperately to inflate these people. The mediocre Claude McKay is "the great black poet." And Witter Bynner—whom D.H. Lawrence satirized in *The Plumed Serpent* as Owen Rhys ("so empty, and waiting for circumstance to fill him up. Swept with an American despair of having lived in vain, or of not having *really* lived")—is "one of the most gifted poets of his generation." Epstein also makes some notable blunders. He calls Lawrence's *Sons and Lovers*, rather than *The Rainbow*, "scandalous," and substitutes "frozen field" for "foreign field" when misquoting the famous lines of Rupert Brooke.

Epstein also fails to explain the complex dynamics of Millay's fascinating sex life. As with Dora Carrington, the elusive bisexual siren of the Bloomsbury Group, it is difficult to see, from photos and descriptions by men who adored her, the extraordinary physical attractiveness of this tiny, skinny woman. Pale, freckled, flat-chested, and chinless, Millay was certainly not beautiful. But she was androgynous, very sexy, and—with 100 certified lovers—always available, responsive, and willing, indeed eager, to sleep with any man who struck her fancy or was able to advance her career. (Editors were her specialty.) Men never had time to seduce Millay, who would ravish them before they got the chance.

On July 18, 1923, Edna married the eager-to-be-cuckolded Eugene Boissevain on the very day she had a major operation for intestinal adhesions. Ficke became a neighbor, and Millay, with Eugene's active encouragement, continued her promiscuous affairs. He seems to have achieved sexual excitement and covert homosexual pleasure (rather than jealousy) by sharing his wife with other men.

I came away from this interesting but disappointing book with quite a different impression of Millay than Epstein intended to convey. Manipulative and selfish, cynical and callous, reckless and destructive, Millay—always the sexual predator—had a pathological desire for "fresh wreckage." If you are not enthralled by her charms, the poetry fails.

Jeffrey Meyers' Inherited Risk: Errol and Sean Flynn in Hollywood and Vietnam *will be published next June by Simon & Schuster. He is now writing a life of Somerset Maugham for Knopf.*

Happenstance Phenomena

by Bruce Ware Allen

The Selected Stories of Patricia Highsmith
by Patricia Highsmith
New York: W.W. Norton & Co.; 672 pp., $27.95

◆

Patricia Highsmith is a peculiar taste, nasty and unpalatable to many. Readers who like her, however, tend to like her enormously. She was born in Fort Worth, Texas, in 1921, the unwanted daughter of a graphic artist who attempted to abort her by drinking turpentine. Her father left home before she was born, and she moved with her mother and stepfather to New York at age eight. In due course, she graduated from Barnard College and took jobs that included writing the storylines to the Superman comics.

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Highsmith's big break came in 1951 with the publication of *Strangers on a Train*. Alfred Hitchcock, in need of a good story to bolster his credibility with the Hollywood studios, bought the film rights for $2,000. The author was disappointed, but Hitchcock assured her that this would be the making of her career. Certainly, it meant the revival of his.

Hitchcock reshaped the story to conform to Hollywood sensibilities, and the usual innocent-man-on-the-run story ends happily with the death of the criminal. Similar liberties were taken with both film versions of *The Talented Mr. Ripley*, the stylish French version *Plein Soleil* and the even more unsatisfactory Matt Damon vehicle of 1999. Again, neither France nor Hollywood, even at this late date, could let the eponymous hero get away with murder.

Such tampering misses Highsmith's vision entirely. As in life, murder in her world, more often than not, is never solved, nor are her malefactors brought to justice. Indeed, justice itself, when it appears, is a happenstance phenomenon. Highsmith cut slack only to animals. Something of a misanthrope but a devoted cat owner, she wrote a series of stories collected in *The Animal-Lover's Book of Beastly Murder*, which makes up the first of the collections in this volume. The common theme is that of various members of the animal world taking their revenge on cruel owners or mankind in general. These are the only truly predictable stories in her work—she apparently could not bear to let the dumb chums get the short end of the stick.

Highsmith had no such qualms about members of her own human sex. In the second collection in this volume, *Little Tales of Misogyny*, we get short portraits of various types of women, chiefly 20th-century middle-class American, some sympathetic, most appalling; among them the 12-year-old who, encouraged by her mother, dresses like a trollop and finds some pleasure in complaining about the commotion she can cause. More than once, the price is rape, but she finds satisfaction in the punishment the law metes out to her own pathetic Humbert Humbert. Coquettes, conniving wives, wives distracted by serial enthusiasms, and the men who lose all in pursuit of them make up the bulk of this decidedly "politically incorrect" work.

Consider the "The Mobile-Bed Object":

> There are lots of girls like Mildred, homeless, yet never without a roof—most of the time the ceiling of a hotel room, sometimes that of a bachelor digs, of a yacht's cabin if they're lucky, a tent of a caravan.

For five pages, we follow Mildred's short, disgusting, fitfully satisfying life until she is murdered quite matter-of-factly by her last squire and immediately forgotten by those few people who knew her. There is genuine mischief in this volume, stuff that might have given pause even to Dorothy Parker or Claire Booth Luce.

The first two books are thematically unified, even gimmicky. The final three (*Slowly, Slowly the Wind*; *The Black House*; and *Mermaids on the Golf Course*) are generally straightforward stories. As with Mildred, chance encounters with violence or even chance escapes mark the lives of Highsmith's characters, set the small dramas on their way, or finish them abruptly. The optimistic American view that you can do or be anything you want to is scotched firmly and often in Highsmith's universe. Those who try to manipulate affairs to satisfy their preferences tend to find that life is indeed haphazard.

Thus, in "The Baby Spoon," we meet Claud Lamm, professor of literature and poetry at Columbia. Married to a nice but unsophisticated woman who irritates his soul, he finds cruel satisfaction in her loss of a keepsake spoon, apparently to the petty thievery of his most promising ex-student, now a starving poet who hits him up for sympathy and money. In time, however, he finds the loss of the spoon works changes in his wife, breaks her out of her childishness, even makes her into someone of whom he can actually be fond. Imagining that others are playing out roles in his own mental drama and for once wanting to share his understanding, he tips a wink to the thief, thanking him for his action. The poet—possibly innocent, certainly overwrought—is offended at the suggestion and, instead of acknowledging his part in the affair, turns violent.

There are flashes of other writers and other stories, chiefly those sharing Highsmith's jaundiced view of life. Evelyn Waugh's watchful Pekinese in "On Guard" finds its more self-concerned counterpart in a Siamese cat in "Ming's Biggest Prey"; his gentle lunatic strangler in "Mr Loveday's Little Outing" gains a less laughable counterpart in "The Button."

Not only is Highsmith deadpan, she is free of sentimentality. Shirley Jackson's "The Lottery," that hopelessly obvious chestnut, gets its workover in "Not One of Us." "It wasn't merely that Edmund Quasthoff had stopped smoking and almost stopped drinking that made him different, slightly goody-goody and therefore vaguely unlikable. It was something else. What?"

What indeed? Certainly Quasthoff is a bore; beyond that, he is the kind of person who somehow makes your claws extend. It does not take much to make a group of Upper East Side sophisticates conspire to mistreat this weakest link in their circle so cruelly as to inspire suicide. Patricia Highsmith cuts a little closer to the bone than Shirley Jackson. Straight delivery triumphs over message or jokiness every time, and you quickly begin to see why she is not for everyone.

And so it should come as no surprise that, once she had hit her stride, Patricia Highsmith found more awards and far better sales in Europe than she did in America. Indeed, *Little Tales of Misogyny* was first published in German translation as *Kleine Geschichten fur Weiberfeinde*. The affection Europe felt for her was mutual, and after 1963, she spent the bulk of her life living and working alone in France, England, and Switzerland, where she died in Locarno in 1995.

Bruce Ware Allen currently works as a systems analyst in New York.

LIBERAL ARTS

GEORGE W. BUSH: ANTISEMITE?

"If President-elect George Bush's Cabinet is supposed to look like America, how come no one looks like me? I don't mean drop-dead handsome with a rakish smile. No, I'm talking about something else. I'm asking how come none of his appointees is Jewish.

"The closest he came was with Linda Chavez, who, while not a Jew, is at least married to one."

—*from Richard Cohen, "No Jews in This Cabinet" (*Washington Post, *January 16, 2001)*

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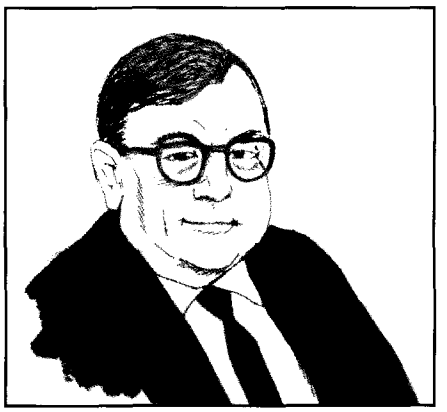
by Samuel Francis

How Do I Hate Thee? Let Me Count the Ways



The cinders of the World Trade Center had barely fallen to the earth before George W. Bush had it all figured out. "America was targeted for attack," the President explained to the nation barely 12 hours after the first plane hit the Manhattan skyscrapers, "because we're the brightest beacon for freedom and opportunity in the world." Perhaps that explanation provided some comfort—though not much enlightenment—to the mystified and terrified millions who were wondering what was happening and why; but it was an explanation upon which the President and many others soon enlarged. By September 20, Mr. Bush could offer the country an expanded account of the motives behind the bloodiest single act of mass murder in history. "Americans are asking, 'Why do they hate us?'" he said during his address to a joint session of Congress, and again he had the answer at his fingertips:

> They hate us for what they see right here in this chamber: a democratically elected government. Their leaders are self-appointed. They hate our freedoms: our freedom of religion, our freedom of speech, our freedom to vote and assemble and disagree with each other.

Among those statesmen who admired both the President's rhetorical gifts as well as the profundity of his political philosophy was the largely forgotten football star Jack Kemp, who advised the public in his syndicated column that "I would add . . . they also hate our democracy, our liberal markets and our abundance of economic opportunity, at which the terror attacks were clearly directed." But even this incisive analysis failed to exhaust the creative powers of the ruling class and its spokesmen in fabricating flattering, self-serving, misleading, and transparently false explanations of the motives of the terrorists who planned and carried out the September 11 attacks.

National Review, once the leading conservative magazine in America, echoed the themes sounded by the President and Mr. Kemp. "The United States is a target because we are powerful, rich, and good," it bustled in an October 1 editorial. "We are resented for our power, envied for our wealth, and hated for our liberty." And, like many of those offering such reasons for the attack, NR was especially concerned to smother any suspicion that it may have been the result of U.S. support for Israel. Two weeks later, Senior Editor Ramesh Ponnuru sallied forth to explain it once more:

> The radical Islamists' broader quarrel is with American power: not with the uses of that power, but with the fact of it. We are infidels. And we are liberal, capitalist, modern, powerful, and rich; therefore hated. Benjamin Netanyahu made the point well when he wrote in the aftermath of the September massacres that the Islamists do not hate the West because of Israel; they hate Israel because of the West. They call us, not Israel, "the Great Satan."

Mr. Netanyahu's point, as dubious as it was, is nonetheless something of an insult: Arab attacks on Israel have nothing to do with Palestinian claims to the land on which Israel now sits nor with continuing complaints of Israeli repression but are really the fault of the United States and the "West" in general (the unstated implication, of course, is that the United States and the West therefore owe Israel their continuing and unbounded support, since there would be no attacks on Israel without the West). Norman Podhoretz, after a ranting attack in a letter to the *New York Post* on conservative columnist Robert Novak for even mentioning the role American support for Israel may have played in the September 11 attacks, unbosomed in the *Wall Street Journal* sentiments largely identical to those of Mr. Netanyahu. So did George Will, who assured us that the terrorists' targets were "symbols not just of American power but of its virtues," explicitly quoted the former Israeli premier as telling us, "They hate 'Zionism as an expression and representation of Western civilization,'" and added that "they hate America because it is the purest expression of modernity—individualism, pluralism, freedom, secularism." Columnist Paul Greenberg, apparently unable to think of any further virtues for which we were attacked, contented himself by telling us that

> the haters need no reason to hate us. It is enough that we are who we are—a free and powerful people. . . . They can't bear our happiness, our prosperity, our power, and most of all the realization that others want to model themselves on us and build their own free societies.

The list could go on, but it soon became apparent that suggesting that U.S. policies in the Middle East—either U.S. support for Israel or our role in the 1991 Gulf War against Iraq—had played a part in the events of September 11 was a certain road to ruin. Nevertheless, the barest acquaintance with what Osama bin Laden and his merry band of cutthroats have said and are saying about the private war they are waging shows that hatred of "democracy," the "West," "liberal markets," and the "virtues" of which Mr. Will boasts have absolutely nothing to do with it.

In 1995, for example, as the *Washington Post* reported on September 23, authorities in the Philippines arrested a gentleman of Pakistani extraction who was discovered to be planning the bombing of 11 American commercial airliners on behalf of bin Laden's network. The draft communiqué in the suspect's possession was quite explicit about the motives that drove him and his accomplices:

> The U.S. government gives mili-

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> tary aircraft to the Jewish state so the Jews can continue fighting and killing. All of this is a result of the U.S. government's financial and military support of the Jewish state. All people who support the U.S. government are our target.

If that is not clear enough, consider what bin Laden himself told *Time* in January 1999 about President Clinton's bombing of Iraq the previous month:

> There is no doubt that the treacherous attack has confirmed that Britain and America are acting on behalf of Israel and the Jews, paving the way for the Jews to divide the Muslim world once again, enslave it and loot the rest of its wealth.

He uttered similar sentiments in an interview with PBS:

> Once again, I have to stress the necessity of focusing on the Americans and the Jews for they represent the spearhead with which the members of our religion have been slaughtered. Any effort directed against America and the Jews yields positive and direct results—Allah willing.

Bin Laden is upset mainly because he thinks U.S. forces have defiled Muslim holy sites in his native Saudi Arabia by military occupation, but retribution for the deaths and damage we have inflicted on Iraq since 1991, as well as our support for Israel against the Palestinians, are major termites under his turban.

That the U.S.-Israeli alliance plays an important role in instigating terrorist attacks against us—a bit more of a role than radical Muslims' distaste for martinis, the stock market, Nicole Kidman, and other achievements of "modernity"—ought to be obvious. Acknowledging that role has nothing to do with whether we should support Israel or pursue our current policies toward Iraq. Like every other policy, these should be judged by the standard of what they contribute to our national interest, not whether a handful of fanatics (Muslim or Jewish) approve or disapprove them. Moreover, it is dangerous to deny and disguise the truth about the role the U.S.-Israeli relationship played in motivating the terrorist attack, as so many public leaders and opinionmakers have. "Keep your friends close, but your enemies closer," Don Corleone advised, and one purpose of staying close to enemies like Osama bin Laden is to understand why they do what they do.

Sensitivity about the Israeli connection clearly lay behind the cant and a good many of the denials that the ruling class threw up around the September 11 attacks, but there was perhaps another purpose as well. The general thrust of virtually all of the false explanations of the attack and of the motivations of the attackers was to praise not only the United States but the kind of social order that the ruling class wants to build and govern—the very sort of transnational global "society" that is animated by Mr. Will's much-treasured "modern virtues" of "individualism, pluralism, freedom, secularism"—and the larger purpose of the rhetorical and analytical fog that was spread around the attacks was precisely to assist in the legitimization and consolidation of ruling-class hegemony and the global regime it is constructing.

Indeed, the genius of the American and, more generally, the Atlantic ruling class is that it is able to manipulate the meaning of words, symbols, and cultural icons into almost the opposite of what they really mean. It was grimly amusing to watch multinational corporations suddenly sport American flags in the wake of the attacks. A couple of years ago, when Ralph Nader's activists asked several Fortune 500 companies to recite the Pledge of Allegiance at their public board meetings, almost all simply refused. Patriotism and nationalism—or, at least, manipulation of their symbols—can sometimes be useful, and in the weeks after the September 11 attack, the ruling class lost no opportunity to massage the public mind as it pleased, mainly for the benefit of its own regime.

The sudden sprouting of Old Glory at corporate headquarters and in glossy magazine advertisements, for example, did not really signify a return to national loyalties and patriotic sentiments, nor did the constant and cloying invocation of patriotism by political leaders. On the contrary, the purpose of such exhibitions was to invest old and accepted symbols like the flag, patriotic songs, and patriotic images with the new universalist and globalist meanings that help legitimize the New World hegemons. That is why we were told constantly that not only did Americans die in the World Trade Center towers, but lots of people from other countries, too; that is why President Bush and other leaders kept banging the drum about how wonderful most Muslims and Arabs are and how the terrorists did not represent *real* Islam, which is part of the New World Order and the New World America. That is why there was such a studied avoidance of any serious consideration of the immigration issue—not just trivial visa security policies but actually reducing or halting the number of foreigners who are allowed to enter, roam around at will, and stay as long as they please. That is also why the constant subtheme of the post-attack discourse was the danger of "hate" (especially from "white hate groups") and "hate crimes." The multinational dimension of the alliance—with Great Britain, ostensibly with NATO, and with various Arab or Muslim states like Saudi Arabia and Pakistan—reemphasized the globalist scope and substance of American power. Almost every assertion of nationality, patriotism, and national security was immediately diluted or modified by counterassertions that insisted that such affirmations should not be taken as abandonments of, or distractions from, America's global mission and universal character or the transnational utopia of "modernity" that the ruling class is building.

What stands out in the response of the American ruling class to the September 11 attacks is not so much the skills of real leadership as an amazing capacity to turn the whole attack and its aftermath into an opportunity for cementing the ruling class's dominance in the United States and its larger, long-term agenda for the planet. Osama bin Laden and his friends ought to learn something from the experience: The richest irony of the most lethal attack on the United States in its history is that, so far from seriously wounding or destabilizing the American megastate, the attack actually helped to increase its power and promote the interests of its elites. c

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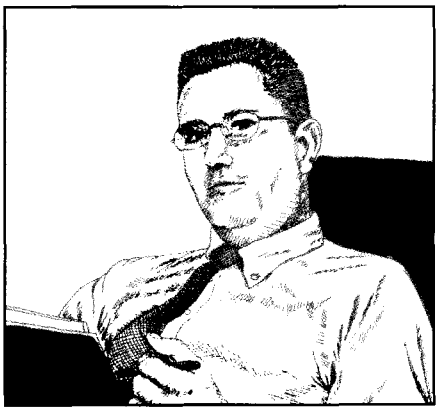
by Scott P. Richert

Consuming Ourselves



When my wife and I were searching for a house in 1996, we had a few basic requirements: We wanted an older home with a decent-sized yard for our children; we wanted to live in an actual neighborhood, not a new, vinyl-sided ranch development; we wanted to be relatively close to *Chronicles*' office; and we wanted to be able to walk to a grocery store.

Whenever I mention that last desire, most people look puzzled. They can understand wanting to be within walking distance of a school (though, because of the Rockford desegregation case, that was never a concern of ours), but of a grocery store? After all, you cannot get "one-stop shopping" and "always low prices" at a small neighborhood grocery, and that is how you should decide where to shop—isn't it?

The neighborhood grocery is an increasingly rare institution, and many (if not most) Americans view it as a slightly more extensive (though less expensive) version of the convenience store: You can pick up a gallon of milk in a pinch, or maybe even stock up on tomato soup when it is on sale, but *real* grocery shopping requires a Safeway or Kroger or Giant or Meijer or Shoppers' Food Warehouse or, of course, the nearly ubiquitous 40-acre Super Wal-Mart. Those who think otherwise may even be regarded as somewhat un-American. (Toward the end of the Cold War, it seemed that every visiting Soviet Bloc dignitary had to tour an American supermarket and express awe at the vast quantities of goods.)

Ultimately, we bought a house about six blocks away from a Hilander, a locally owned (at that time) grocery-store chain, and considered ourselves lucky to be so close. But over the past five-and-a-half years, out walking on summer evenings with the children, I have found a half-dozen houses within that six-block radius that clearly began life as grocery stores—square brick or frame buildings with flat roofs, large front windows, and central doors, usually (though not always) located on a corner lot. (Similar buildings with much smaller windows and side or corner doors were neighborhood taverns, and we have a few of them as well—but that is a topic for another column.) In other parts of the city, a few of these grocers have survived by transforming into specialty stores—an Italian grocer sits kitty-corner to St. Anthony's Church on the southwest side and opens for a few hours after Sunday Mass, while Pinnon's Market, on the northwest side, and Longwood Market, on the near east side, are known as two of Rockford's finest butchers. In my east-central neighborhood, however, the Rural Oaks Hilander was it.

Even though the store is still open, I write in the past tense because, in September 1998, the Castrogiovanni family of Rockford sold the Hilander chain to Kroger, the Cincinnati-based supermarket giant. About six months earlier, one of the two other locally owned grocery chains, Logli, had been purchased by Schnucks of St. Louis. (The third local chain, Dal Pra Pacemaker, is down to one store in Belvidere, east of Rockford, having closed its last Rockford store about a year ago. A fourth chain, Gray's, is an IGA franchise, although the stores are locally owned.) Both Kroger and Schnucks have retained the local names, and for a while, the stores even looked the way they always had. Gradually, however, the corporate identity has wiped out the local one—which is not surprising, since, at the time of its sale, Hilander had five stores, while Kroger had 2,300 in 31 states, employed 305,000 people, and raked in $45 billion in sales. Logli had only three stores (although one was the largest supermarket in Illinois), while Schnucks had 89 stores in Missouri, Indiana, and Illinois, with sales in the millions. Store brands have replaced local ones; floor plans have been changed to conform to the latest marketing studies; and the corporate names are becoming more prominent, both in the stores and in their advertising. At Kroger/Hilander, many of the students and retirees who manned the cash registers have been replaced with automated checkout lanes that may be expensive but never call in sick.

"Who cares?" big-market conservatives respond. "You should be grateful that Kroger and Schnucks—and Wal-Mart, too—took an interest in your town. After all, the sheer size of these companies means that they are good for consumers, because they can cut better deals with suppliers and pass the savings on to shoppers." This is not the place to argue whether their facts are correct (though I suspect that the lack of local competition is bad for consumers, particularly in smaller towns where Wal-Mart or Kroger acts as a monopoly); the deeper problem is that man is more than a consumer. He is a producer, a provider, a parent, a child, a neighbor, a citizen, and in many (or most, or all) of these roles, he is better served by economic institutions on a human scale. Whatever Wal-Mart and Kroger might represent, they do not represent that.

Once upon a time, the grocery was, like the local school, a focal point of a neighborhood. The shopkeeper acted as an informal sources of news; neighbors greeted one another in the aisles. (I do not think I have ever run into anyone I know at the Charles Street or State Street Schnucks/Logli.) The grocery was often, in its own way, a neighborhood bank and charity as well. Today, we have replaced the decentralized credit extended by small proprietors (at little or no interest) with credit cards charging usurious rates, and the humane charity of the shopkeeper (offered through quiet discounts and the writing off of bills) with bondage to the welfare state. "Always low prices" hides a multitude of social costs.

There are alternatives: Here in Rockford, we can buy local produce at the 320 Store; fresh and smoked meats at the Polish Deli and Penguin Foods; cheese and bread at Caravello's and DiTullio's Italian markets. Because of competition from the chains, however, none of these can afford to stock everything that we need. And so, reluctantly, we head off to the MegaLoMart, to become part of the problem, not the solution.

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Letter From Paris

by Curtis Cate

Mad Cow Madness

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One of the hallmarks of our crazy, crazed, and increasingly raucous age is the insidious war that is being waged in most regions of the Western world against silence, virtually blackballed as an undesirable, something to be avoided at almost any cost, lest it induce boredom and reduce one to a piteous state of solitary rumination. It is virtually impossible today to ring up a business office, a travel agency, an airline, or a railway station without, while waiting for your respondent, being force-fed with music—much as the poor geese of Alsace and the Dordogne are stuffed with grain and corn to produce *foie gras*, or as the milk cows in many countries of Western Europe have been encouraged to ingurgitate vast quantities of ultramodern, protein-enriched, technically carnified meal to supplement old-fashioned fodder.

A few years ago, an ingenious scientist whose name I have forgotten decided to subject a "group"—one can no longer use the word "herd" for such captive creatures—of milk cows to this kind of sonic "entertainment." The carefully stalled cows were alternately lulled or stimulated by generous doses or Bach, Mozart, Haydn, Schubert—Beethoven, I believe, was excluded *a priori* as too violent and upsetting—as well as to more modern rhythms, to see if this auricular enchantment might improve the quality of the milk coaxed from bloated udders. The music that most visibly contented the cows was neither the tango, nor the fox-trot, the Charleston, the Lambeth Walk, or any kind of New Orleans "Blues"; it was, quite simply, the Straussian waltz! The experiment, apparently, was not carried any further; but I am willing to wager that if some modern-minded scientist were to repeat the experiment today and treat the captive creatures to a sonic bombardment of "hard rock" or "rap," the milk produced would quickly curdle in the pail.

I know little about agriculture—even though my mother once ran a fruit farm in Brittany, while an uncle of mine in Ohio used to produce the largest, juiciest, and most delicious tomatoes I have ever eaten—but I am extremely sensitive to sound. And in the more than 40 years that I have been living in France, and more particularly in Paris, I cannot offhand recall ever having been so deafened—not even during the tumultuous, tear-gas-*versus*-barricades "Red May and June" of 1968—by such a concentrated mediatric barrage of panic-stricken and panic-striking "news flashes" and headlines as in early November 2000, when the entire French nation (of close to 60 million souls) seemed to have been seized by a new form of collective hysteria, deserving to be called "Mad-Cow Madness." The trouble started—if a simmering anxiety of this kind can be said to have a specific beginning—on Friday, November 3, when Paris's third-most-important newspaper, the left-wing *Libération*, announced that French scientists had discovered that the *côte de boeuf* (what Americans call the "T-bone steak") was dangerous, because of its proximity to the central nervous system, and that, if improperly cut by inexperienced butchers, it could infect beef-eaters with the deadly Jakob-Kreutzfeld virus (more precisely, that mysterious new entity now known as the "prion"). Within a couple of days, panic-stricken beef lovers had cut their orders by 30 percent—at one point it was even 50 percent—to the consternation of meat dealers at the huge wholesale meat, vegetable, and fruit market of Rungis, southeast of Paris. In Marseille, Toulouse, Bordeauz, and many other cities, as in nine of Paris's 19 districts, school canteens abruptly eliminated all forms of beef from their luncheon menus.

The following Monday, France's leading daily, *Le Figaro*, headlined: "*Vache folle. Des vérités dérangeantes*" ("Mad Cow. Disturbing truths"). On Tuesday, the prestigious afternoon newspaper, *Le Monde*, drew its readers' attention to the "great fear of the mad cow," and by the next morning—the "hang-over Wednesday" of November 8—the visual (press) and audiovisual (TV) storm had reached Gale Force 8 in a howling, decibelic climax. While the rest of the world held its breath in anxious anticipation, news of the American presidential election was blown off the front pages of Paris newspapers by the hurricane impact of this new "crisis" in an unprecedented exhibition of national *nombrilisme* (navel-watching). "*La vache affole a France*" ("The cow scares France stiff"), proclaimed *France-soir*, which, its title notwithstanding, is a morning paper, while *Libération* shortened the formula to "*La vache affole*" ("The Cow Scares," or, equally, "Drives Crazy"). The popular tabloid, *Le Parisien*, chose a one-word Hitchcockian shocker: "*Psychose.*" But the prize for lurid coverage was unquestionably snatched by the normally respectable *Figaro*, which spread over its front page a huge color photograph of long rows of strung-up beef, hanging from metal racks in a wholesaling warehouse, under the headline: "*Vache folle: Chirac décrète l'urgence*" ("Mad Cow: Chirac decrees emergency").

The day before, in an "impromptu" television address delivered from his presidential office in the Elysée Palace, Jacques Chirac had called for the *immediate* banning of all animal fodders for the feeding of cows. This was not the first time he had proposed this drastic measure, easier to recommend than to implement, so dependent have French farmers become on the use of animal fodder to feed and fatten their cattle, particularly during the winter months. But the astutely chosen suddenness of Chirac's *pronunciamento*, made during the 1:00 P.M. "prime time" television peak when millions of housewives are preparing or have sat down to have lunch, gave the statement an unprecedented impact. Not least of all, it took Socialist Prime Minister Lionel Jospin and his government completely by surprise. Wednesday is habitually the day when the entire French cabinet holds a formal meeting at the Elysée Palace, under the chairmanship of the president of the republic. This weekly meeting is normally preceded by an informal get-together between the president and the prime minister, where the agenda is briefly discussed in advance. Logically, and as a matter of simple courtesy, Jacques Chirac should have waited until Wednesday morning and given his Prime Minister advance warning of his televised address. But there is little place

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for courtesy in rough-and-tumble politics—particularly in a country which now has a curiously bicephalous form of government, in which a more or less conservative president has to live in a state of supposedly harmonious "cohabitation" with an outspokenly nonconservative and socialistic prime minister. Not surprisingly, there were immediate protests of "foul play!" from Jospin's Socialist supporters. They accused Chirac (quite rightly) of having pulled a neat political trick on his prime minister by making the latter's cautious and supposedly "logical" policy on the animal-feed question—"Let us not be stampeded into any rash measures, let us wait for what the scientists have to say on this issue . . . in four months time"—look dilatory and inept.

This is not the place to discuss the structural weaknesses of France's present political system. Suffice it to say that they were written into the constitution of the Fifth Republic, when it was established in 1958, by one of De Gaulle's most devoted servants: the man he chose as his first prime minister, Michel Debré. That constitution was tailor-made in at least one vital respect. The president of the republic, as the "chief of its armies" and the guarantor of the stability of the state, was officially granted *de jure* precedence in matters of national defense and foreign affairs—the two subjects that truly interested De Gaulle. The practical, day-to-day, "hand-dirtying" problems of running the government and obtaining the approval of a National Assembly (for which, on the whole, De Gaulle felt a sovereign contempt), and not least of all economic matters, were left to the prime minister and his colleagues.

This reflected the general's deep-seated conviction that long-range policy is more important than petty politics and tactical maneuvering and that, as he once declared with military crispness to his finance minister (the sober, unassuming, pragmatic Antoine Pinay), "*L'intendance n'a qu'à suivre*" ("The job of the quartermaster and supply corps is to follow"). Thus, in 1962, the sordid job of liquidating an Algerian problem De Gaulle had been unable to solve was delegated to his second prime minister, Georges Pompidou.

As long as the president of the republic was supported by a faithful parliamentary majority—as was the case, after De Gaulle, with presidents Georges Pompidou and Valéry Giscard d'Estaing—this bicephalous system worked fairly well, guaranteeing France a political stability it had never known during the Third and Fourth Republics, when, thanks to a puppetlike presidency and the fractional disputes of a supposedly all-powerful but in fact paralytically omni-impotent Chamber of Deputies, a prime minister was lucky it he could remain in office for more than 18 months. But since 1986, when a Socialist president, François Mitterrand, was forced to accept an anti-Socialist prime minister, Jacques Chirac, backed by a conservative parliamentary majority, the system has been subjected to increasing strains. It was an open secret that Mitterrand and Chirac detested each other cordially. Indeed, the subtle François—certainly the wiliest politician in the history of the Fourth Republic—never lost an opportunity of "casually" thwarting or ironically needling his prime minister.

There was a lessening of tension in 1993 when Mitterrand, again faced with an "opposition" majority in the National Assembly, picked the cautious, pussyfooting Edouard Balladur, a man of India-rubber-like pliancy, to be his prime minister. But the tension returned—one can say with a vengeance—in 1997 when President Jacques Chirac, in the clumsiest miscalculation of his political career, dissolved the National Assembly and found himself unexpectedly confronted by a hostile parliamentary majority headed by a rigidly orthodox Socialist, Lionel Jospin.

Ever since then, the skirmishing between the two opposing centers of power—Jacques Chirac's Elysée Palace north of the Seine, Lionel Jospin's Hôtel Matignon on the Left Bank—has provided Paris journalists with superabundant satirical material. Claim though Chirac might, as a neo-Gaullist, to have a "right" to primacy in the formulation and enunciation of France's major aims in the fields of foreign affairs and defense, in practice, the actual implementation of French diplomacy and military policy has been firmly controlled by Socialist ministers of foreign affairs and defense—to such an extent, indeed, that Chirac is now sometimes mocked by critics as being little more than a "decorative" president and as impotent and "*fainéant*" ("do-nothing") as were the Merovingian kings of early French history.

Nothing has contributed more to exasperate this constitutional tussle than the fact that the two antagonists are now, in effect, battling for the nation's highest prize: the French presidency, due to be disputed in the spring of 2002. And never, perhaps, has this antagonistic rivalry been more blatantly and pathetically displayed than at a Franco-German summit held in late November 2000 in the eastern watering-spa of Vittel, during which—to the evident amusement of the German Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder—the "impetuous" Jacques Chirac called once again for *immediate* action in the mad-cow crisis, while the frowning, seemingly imperturbable but inwardly fuming Lionel Jospin reiterated his belief that the situation was under control and must be handled in a calm, resolute, and "rational" (as opposed to hysterical) manner.

It cannot honestly be claimed that, in this "mad cow" crisis, any prominent French politician—not even Jacques Chirac, a former minister of agriculture who has long prided himself on having a particular fondness and affinity for French farmers—has displayed truly prophetic foresight and perspicacity—for a very simple reason. Almost all of them have been highly urbanized technocratic products of the Ecole Nationale d'Administration or (like former president Valéry Giscard d'Estaing) of the no-less-prestigious Ecole Polytechnique. One and all, without exception and no matter what their political label or affiliation, have shared the same guiding inspiration. They have all wished to promote "agricultural progress." They have all wanted to "improve," to "modernize," to achieve "greater efficiency," and thus, unwittingly (and, all too often, wittingly), to *industrialize* French agriculture.

One of the most misleading clichés of our fad-loving age is the naive notion, popularized by Alvin Toffler and other "futurists," that we are now living in a radically new, "postindustrial" society. This is sheer, but oh-so-typical, mind-confusing, ego-boosting nonsense. It is not because a factory has been "automated," with electronically controlled robots replacing "old-fashioned" workers armed with screwdrivers and wrenches, that it ceases to be an industrial enterprise. The electronic improvements simply make it more efficient, more perfectly geared to the aim and essence of the industrial process: *mass production*. And if there is one domain, above all, in which it makes even less sense to claim that we are living in a "postindustrial age," it is, without doubt, that of agriculture. The furious desire to "improve" and "modernize"—in a word, to *industrialize*—"old-fash-

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ioned" agricultural procedures has been the root cause of the "mad-cow" crisis in Europe.

Being old enough to have known a time—for example, in the Brittany of the early 1950's—when many peasants had plain earth rather than wooden floors to walk on, and when many rural areas of France still lacked power lines and electricity, I was slow to realize that the relentless efforts made by successive governments in Paris to make French agriculture "more productive and efficient" might ultimately have catastrophic consequences. I was first aroused from my dogmatic complacency by an extraordinary Frenchman named Pierre Massenet. He had, as prefect of the Bouches-du-Rhône department, managed to checkmate a communist insurrection in Marseilles during the tense summer of 1947 and was, for this achievement, appointed the first "superprefect" in the history of the Fourth Republic (with jurisdiction over eight departments). He later launched the modernization of Paris's antiquated métro and bus services (today, among the finest in the world), and ended his career in the late 1960's as a member of the Conseil d'Etat.

The Conseil d'Etat, or Council of State, though merely an advisory body, is one of France's most prestigious and useful institutions. It was established in 1804 by Napoleon, who wanted to give Consular and then Imperial France a corps of well-trained diplomats, administrators, financiers, and treasury officials whose professional advice, on the basis of personal experience, could then be "tapped" by the government. The most remarkable feature of this consultative council—a provision insisted on by Napoleon, who had no use for parliamentary windbags and rhetorical virtuosos—is the absolute secrecy of its deliberations. The minutes of its meetings are never published, so each of its 60 or more members can express himself with total freedom without fear of having his opinions repeated beyond the council's walls and subsequently held against him by political enemies or busybody journalists. It was probably this wise provision, encouraging a maximum of intellectual courage and integrity, which, as much as the imperial aura of its founder, has assured its prestigious longevity. No major bill can be presented to the French parliament without first having been "vetted" by the Conseil d'Etat to see if what is being proposed has been properly drafted, is exempt from contradictions, and is of genuine benefit to society; and, though the government in power can choose to ignore the Council's negative opinion—the exact number of Conseillers d'Etat voting for or against is never published—a negative verdict often has the force of law and, in any case, provides the adversaries of controversial bills or decrees with powerful ammunition. It was, if I rightly recall, sometime in 1969, not long after the revolutionary upheavals of 1968 and shortly before De Gaulle's abrupt abdication from the presidency, that Pierre Massenet one day informed me glumly that the Conseil d'Etat had been asked to approve a radical reformation of existing slaughterhouse practices. The old, haphazard methods were going to be outlawed, everything was going to be streamlined and centralized, and the slaughtering of beef cattle was going to be carried out scientifically in ultramodern abattoirs. "Just think what this is going to mean," he said, perceiving my puzzled incomprehension. "The butchers of this country will no longer be free to decide when and how to slaughter their beasts—there where it has traditionally been done. If this bill becomes law, everything from now on will be regimented from the top"—he meant by technocrats—"and the French butcher will no

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longer be master in his own house."

The man who made this somber prediction was no enemy of progress. An aeronautical engineer by training, he had helped to modernize the Paris subway system by informing his subordinates the day he assumed control, "Today we are twenty years behind the times. Working night and day, in five years time we may be only fifteen years behind . . . " Nor do I think that he had been at all influenced by Georges Duhamel's *Scènes de la vie future*—one of the nastiest and most vitriolic books ever written about the United States, the work of a popular French novelist who had been so horrified by what he saw during a visit made to the stockyards and slaughterhouses of Chicago during the reign of Herbert Hoover that he had decided once and for all that, if this was modern man's vision of the future, he wanted none of it. Massenet, who had married the half-English daughter of the French historian Paul Hazard and who, as an anti-Nazi resister during the German occupation of 1942-44, had welcomed the Allied landings in Normandy and later in Provence, was in no sense anti-American. But he was also someone who detested homogeneity, liked diversity, and who was quite rightly proud of the rustic ingenuity and individuality of French peasants who, over the centuries, had managed to invent more than 250 different cheeses—almost certainly a record unchallenged by any other country. His motto was one that the French aviator-author, Antoine de Saint-Exupéry, a poet with a keen interest in aeronautic innovations, had coined in the mid 1930's: *"J'admire la Science, bien sûr. Mais, J'admire aussi la sagesse."* ("I admire Science, of course. But I also admire Wisdom"). And what Massenet foresaw and feared was that, in the process of agricultural "rationalization" that the "modernists" were out to impose on France, it was hasty science that would win, while unhurried wisdom was the loser—which is exactly what happened.

The traditional way of doing things was relatively simple—and also salubrious. Every town of a certain size had an abattoir, to which livestock farmers brought their cattle to be slaughtered when the animals had reached a suitable age and weight. The abattoir was usually located near a stream or river, so that the blood could flow down sluices into the water, along with scraps or entrails, which were eagerly snapped up and devoured by pike and other fish—to the delight of local fishermen who, being also carnivorous, ran no risk of being poisoned or rendered insane by what they ate. The remaining carcasses and bones were then burnt, the ashes were mixed with manure, and, after being given time to decompose, the resultant compost was used to enrich the soil of nearby fields. In this way, nature's slow ways were respected, and the fertilized soil was allowed to fulfill its age-old purifying function.

The rationalization of French slaughterhouse procedures would not have had any catastrophic consequences had the "modernist" promoters not undertaken to go Mother Nature one better. As so often happens with men of this species, they were in a hurry and persuaded that they could do more simply, quickly, and efficiently what Mother Nature took several years to accomplish. Instead of being reduced to ashes, carcasses and other animal remains would be scientifically heated, much as Louis Pasteur had done in "decontaminating" milk, and then mixed with grain to provide cows with protein-rich fodder for the long winter months. French milk cows, in the old, "inefficient" past, were normally expected to provide from 17 to 25 liters of fresh milk per day. This, inspectors from the Ministry of Agriculture in Paris now began insisting, was a ridiculously low level of output. If French dairy farmers were ever to "modernize" themselves and catch up with the Danes, the Dutch, or the British, they would have to increase the daily yield to 30, 35, 40, and yes—why not?—in the case of champion heifers, to 50 liters a day!

Now no milk cow, no matter how lush and abundant the green grass it is allowed to chew, can possibly provide more than 30 liters of milk a day unless it is also provided with protein-enriched fodder. Enterprising farmers, those truly motivated with a desire to "get ahead in the world," were thus officially encouraged to abandon their old-fashioned, inefficient ways and to modernize their output. Where were they to get the protein-enriched fodder needed to inflate their milk cows' udders? The answer was simple: by buying the ready-to-eat meal that, almost overnight, enterprising new distributors were now obtaining and "refining" from large-scale abattoirs. It all made wonderful sense—above all economically, since two birds could now be killed by a single stone. The abattoir wastes could be successfully disposed of by *selling* them to modern-minded, truly progressive farmers, while the farmers' milk cows received the nutritional "boost" they needed to become champions of lactic productivity. Submissive as ever, the cows (who were given no choice in the matter) were thus concentrated into production-line stalls and coaxed into consuming the meal and grain they were offered like the tens of thousands of hens we have recently been shown on French TV screens flapping around in huge poultry factories in desperate search of what is supposed to be grain (and which, I might add, are often force-fed at night under bright lights, so that they can go on laying eggs nonstop with shells that are now so brittle that they crack in your fingers under the slightest pressure).

In 1985, a Stockholm journalist, Erik Fichtelius, whose cat had died of poisoning after eating some minced meat, enlisted the help of his veterinarian to find out what had gone wrong. They had an autopsy conducted and the half-digested meat subjected to a laboratory analysis. Fichtelius then traced the meat back to the farm from which it had come, thus discovering what he and so many other urban consumers were blissfully unaware of: that heifers destined for the slaughterhouse were being carnivorously "beefed up" with generous doses of protein-rich animal fodder to supplement what they could obtain by grazing naturally in their pastures. His resultant exposé, broadcast on radio and then TV programs, stirred up such a rumpus that the Swedish government prudently decided then and there to ban the further use of animal foodstuffs for cows.

The following year, a Swedish journalist in London approached his colleagues at the BBC and tried to persuade them that this question of force-feeding cows was a fascinating subject, well worth investigation in a country that prided itself, not without reason, on its agricultural productivity. He was politely informed that what had happened in Sweden was a purely local matter and could not possibly affect the British Isles.

How then can one explain that, in this vitally important matter, British farmers, and the governmental officialdom that was supposed to supervise and guide them, should have been so recklessly incautious in promoting this perilous kind of carnivorous force-feeding? Part of the answer, I believe, is that the British live on an overcrowded island and, unlike the neutral Swedes, they came near to starv-

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ing during the early 1940's when they were saved by massive food shipments carried across the Atlantic by hundreds of "Liberty" ships more or less protected by the submarine-hunting destroyers of the U.S. and Royal navies. The British, a proud, insular people, would like nothing better than to be agriculturally self-sufficient, like the more fortunate, less constricted, and more sun-blessed French; and never was this feeling, one of jealous admiration, more strongly felt than in the first postwar decades, when the first hesitant steps were being taken on the eastern shores of the English Channel to overcome the ultranationalistic rivalries and frenzies that had torn the continent to pieces. The English countryside is one of chalky downs and rolling hills, with plenty of lovely woodlands where—but, one wonders, for how long?—foxes are still hunted in the grand manner with hounds and horses. There is nothing on this densely populated island that is remotely comparable to the broad beetroot planted flatlands of Picardy or the vast plains of the Beauce, between Chartres and the Loire, which make France self-sufficient in sugar and cereals, nothing comparable to the vineyards of Burgundy and Bordeaux, which provide this lucky country with fine wines and champagnes, to say nothing of the more sun-blessed regions of the South, where almost anything—from corn to colza, from lavender to thyme and basil—can easily be grown. Unable to compete with this rich diversity, John Bull and his fellow Britons could at least show their not-so-distant cousins in Normandy and elsewhere that they were champions of agricultural efficiency—by producing milk cows of an incomparable productivity, which meant, in practice, force-feeding and stuffing them with animal-enriched feed.

In 1962, five years after the promulgation of the Treaty of Rome and the establishment of a Common European Market, a common agricultural policy was introduced in order to "coordinate" and "modernize" the agricultural policies of the member states. Its major operating principle was simple, as described by a wise farmer who sought to buck the fatal trend: "The more one produced, the more one received—in subsidies—for more fertilizers, more pesticides, more medicines, more concentrated foodstuffs" (to say nothing of veterinary bills). And what made this practice, originally intended to protect European farmers from being ruined by unfair competition from such major grain exporters as the United States, particularly pernicious was the establishment of quantitive criteria based on productive output rather than by a hectare or acreage calculation determining what the cultivated land could reasonably provide in sustenance, particularly for milk cows and cattle. Thus was instituted a racket in which the more enterprising and "dynamic" farmers, keen to recognize a good deal when offered, in effect allied themselves with agro-industrial lobbyists, manufacturers of chemical fertilizers and animal-enriched meal, and technocratic "modernizers" from Paris and Brussels. The result, as a wise Breton farmer, André Pochon, has shown in an eye-opening book, *Les champs du possible—Plaidoyer pour une agriculture durable* (*The Fields of Possibility—A Plea for a Durable Agriculture*), is that 20 percent of today's French farmers receive 80 percent of the handouts so generously offered by the technocrats in Brussels. Many of the less fortunate run up huge bills and eventually bankrupt themselves by overinvesting in chemical fertilizers, enriched foodstuffs, and the rest—having not realized until after it was too late that, as Pochon claims, it costs five times more to have cattle force-fed in stalls on animal-enriched fodder than to graze normally on pastures enriched by white clover, lucern, or vetch.

A friend of the small, traditional farmer, Pochon makes no secret of his left-wing sympathies, but this has not kept him from being as critical of Socialist as of conservative politicians. In 1981, when—after 22 years of conservative predominance in France—François Mitterrand's Socialists (with invaluable communist support) took over, Pochon was hoping that, at last, things would change. He was soon disabused of that notion. When the new minister of agriculture, Edith Cresson (she later became France's first female prime minister), showed signs of wishing to aid small farmers—her motto was "Small is beautiful"—the boss of France's most powerful agricultural lobby, the FNSEA (Fédération Nationale des Syndicats d'Exploitants agricoles) organized a noisy demonstration of "irate" farmers, who successfully blocked the Rue de Varenne, where the Ministry of Agriculture occupies an enormous building not far from the prime minister's residence, rhythmically banging their milk-cans and shouting, "*Cresson démission!*" ("Cresson, Resign!"). Reacting with the kind of prudent courage French politicians now invariably display in such cases, Mitterrand took fright, sent Edith Cresson packing, and had her replaced by an authentic "modernist," Michel Rocard, whose credentials were impeccable as a graduate of the Ecole Nationale d'Administration. The right-wing technocrats who had been running the show were thus replaced by a new team of technocrats from the left. The supermarketization of France could now be launched with the full support of a Socialist government. Milk-collecting "distributors" who had previously found it quite normal to pick up milk from small farms were replaced by high-powered collectors working for various supermarket chains who were solely interested in bulk purchases from large-scale dairy farms. Within five years, as Pochon notes, half of France's traditional dairy farms disappeared, accelerating a flight from the land and the "desertification" of the French countryside, which, with the loss of some 70,000 farmers *per annum*, has continued to this day.

But what, the impatient reader may well ask, has all this to do with mad-cow dementia—of which, so far, there have been in France slightly more than 200 registered cases (compared to 1,070 in Great Britain)? The answer given to me by my butcher—one of the 2,500 who have managed to survive in Paris (compared to 4,000 just 20 years ago)—is that, in France (as in other European countries), first-class beef is provided by heifers whose ages usually vary from two-and-a-half to four years. To become a heifer, a milk cow must normally produce at least one calf. Before that moment, the cow may well have been force-fed animal foodstuffs; thereafter, however, grazing is an essential prerequisite. This is indeed the practice followed with "second-category" cows that need to be "beefed up" with artificial fodders in order to reach a suitable weight, or with overage milk cows that are put out to graze after six or seven years of "service." The *vache de retour*—the technical term for this "inferior" creature—is then sent off to the abattoir to be slaughtered and sold to supermarket wholesalers as good enough for minced meat. It is among cows in this "second-rate" category, which have been artificially force-fed, that cases of BSE (bovine spongiform encephalopathy) have been found.

"But what about the bulls?" I asked.

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"The bulls? There aren't any!" was the stupefying answer. My butcher went on to explain that it takes a Spanish stomach to adapt itself to the tough *toro* your are often offered south of the Pyrenees. The more fastidious French prefer veal—of which, here too, there are two categories: calves that are directly nourished from their mother's udders or from milk in the pail, which are sent to the slaughterhouse after seven or eight weeks, and which fetch a higher price; and "industrial" calves that are sold to special "calf raisers" who nourish them on powdered milk, vegetable oils, and flour, and which are killed when they are three months old. Increasingly unwanted because of the inferior taste, there are now a million tons of the latter kind of frozen veal waiting to be disposed of in refrigeration plants in France and other European countries.

"But surely," I insisted with Candide-like naiveté, "a lot of bulls must be preserved to assure the survival of the bovine species?"

"A few, of course," replied my butcher, clearly amused by my loutish ignorance. "But practically all cows today are made pregnant through artificial insemination."

It took me some time, I must confess, to recover from the shock. But what, after all, could be more normal in our increasingly scientific age than this latest triumph of technology? Today the "happy few," as Stendhal might have called them, can still savor that Savoyard delicacy, *quenelles de brochet à la mode de Nantua*—sausage-shaped quenelles made of pike, covered with a delicious sauce—thanks to crayfish imported from still unpolluted streams in Central Europe. But let us not despair, since—least of all in the country that invented the notion of progress—*on n'arrête pas le progrès*. Tomorrow, even if the oceans are totally depleted, our children will be able to devour cleverly canned cod, halibut, or plaice, manufactured in ultramodern agrochemical plants and offered to unruminant consumers in super-MacDo eateries. With, of course, piped music thoughtfully supplied against boredom by Vivendi International.

Curtis Cate, who has spent most of his life in France, is the author of biographies of Antoine de Saint-Exupéry, George Sand, and André Malraux.

Letter From Panarea

by Andrei Navrozov

Night and Day

When I first clambered onto the Italian carousel, at Piazza della Fontana di Trevi, my impressions were a kind of paean to the seriousness of Roman life. Now, some four years later and roughly 400 kilometers to the south, I find myself in Palermo, marveling at the essential childishness of the people. I dare say that those who would seize upon this apparent contradiction, suggesting that the dreamer has finally come down to earth, have never been to a fairground and never bothered to observe children at play.

There are, after all, some children who are good—that is to say, serious—although they are usually a beleaguered minority. They are the ones whose games are a pleasure to watch. Obviously, this does not mean one can ask them to balance the checkbook or move the car, and at times they may seem somewhat boisterous, but on the whole they are an altogether different breed from the autistic, rowdy, collectivist animals that the term "jungle gym"—fusing, as the Protestant world often does, the untrammeled nature of J.J. Rousseau with the careful nurture of Hitler Youth—brings to mind. In fact, nice children are as unlike these gum-chewing automatons as St. Francis of Assisi is unlike Martin Luther, or as the Mediterranean is unlike the North Sea. So if the Italians are at all like children, then my argument is that they are like *nice* children.

The island of Panarea, where I spent a couple of weeks honing that point to satisfaction, is one of the half-dozen small volcanic islands that lie off the northern coast of Sicily. Unlike its equally beautiful Eolian neighbors (Stromboli, Salina, Lipari, Alicudi, Filicudi, and Vulcano), which are mostly visited by families from Naples and Palermo during the summer holidays—cue the 1950's, old issues of *Life* stacked up in the whitewashed boathouse, and the canoe scene from *The Seven-Year Itch*—Panarea of late has been making the society pages of glossy magazines in Milan, Paris, and London. The reason is Raya, and Raya is *un night pieno di vip*.

Before this charming and, in Anglo-American social terms, hopelessly misleading formulation can be interpreted, I ask the reader to follow me to a very different playground, whose nightlife I had had the opportunity to observe earlier in the summer. Ibiza, where some English friends of mine just bought a house in the hills, is only nominally part of Catholic Spain, its summer population almost entirely made up of nightclub revelers from Britain, Germany, Holland, and the Scandinavian countries, with a sprinkling of Americans to lend authenticity to the enterprise. This is because all the music played in the island's clubs by celebrity disc jockeys, the most established among them earning $100,000 an hour, is American, in the sense that all the amplified noise, a prerecorded combination of words and sounds, is produced and packaged in the United States.

I thought I had some inkling of what that meant, recalling successfully a popular song from the late 1970's entitled *Ring My Bell*. In retrospect, I'm proud to remember the name of the diva, Anita Ward, whose offering astonished me at the time by its almost Sapphic simplicity. But in Ibiza, I realized that, as a composer, compared to the American music now going, Miss Ward was Mahler, if not Schoenberg. As a poet, she was difficult, almost obscure. I'm no musician, but the lyric content of what I heard in Ibiza was along these lines: "Piece . . . of . . . meat. / Piece . . . of . . . meat. / Piece . . . of . . . meat."

Even after a quarter of an hour, or roughly five minutes to make out each word, I could still have been wrong, of course. It might have been fuzzy feet, or ear of wheat, or peace to Crete, or something about the heat.

Eight of us ended up in the "VIP section" of a nightclub named Pacha, leaving behind $2,000. Commercially speaking, these establishments are extremely conventional catharsis machines that operate exactly like the strip joints of old Soho, where a Japanese tourist in London might go, attracted by the false advertising of all manner of debauchery over the front door, only to be robbed of his cash and credit cards and thrown out the back into an even smellier alley. Culturally speaking, however, they are a thing to see, because, while the elevated "VIP section" was still empty at 5:00 A.M., obviously as symbolic as the cake to which young debutantes used to curtsy in the

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absence of royalty, the dance floor below was the dialectical synthesis of the "individual conscience" of Luther and the "proletarian masses" of Marx. Of course, I always knew they were one and the same, these two Kraut bugaboos, but it isn't often that one actually gets to stare into the dilated pupils of one's political intuition.

The spectacle I was witnessing had little to do with drugs, despite Ibiza's reputation as the drug capital of Europe. It had little to do with morality and immorality, with sex and rock 'n' roll. What lay before me on the dance floor below, stretching as far as the eye could see, had come straight from archival footage of a Nuremberg rally. "Piece of meat," roared the state-of-the-art speaker, and 5,000 bodies jerked as one in reply. As at Nuremberg, it did not really matter what the lyric content was, and whether the larger-than-life speaker was denouncing the Jews who would take away our meat or lauding the Gentiles who would bring peace to Crete. It was not the heat; it was the anonymity.

"*Brutta gente*," is what an Italian would sadly murmur in the circumstances, addressing nobody in particular. "Horrible people." The antonym of this, in his frame of reference, would be *vip*, which no more means VIP than *night* means a place like Pacha. The Italian may think it means Milanese industrialists and Roman television personalities, but what it really, honestly means is people just like himself, *gente per bene*, ordinary, well-dressed people with good jobs, big mortgages, and aged parents. Like the bar of the Hotel de la Poste in Cortina in winter, Raya on Panarea is full of them. Being nice children, they are a pleasure to watch as they drink, dine, and dance on the endless terrace overhanging a moonlit sea.

Unlike their autistic, rowdy, collectivist counterparts, they don't want to forget their failed lives and dissolve in the mass anonymity of the global march to progress. Indeed, what is there to forget if you are a 20-year-old boy from Treviso? You have a loving family, a mother who phones you on the mobile to check if you've made it to the discotheque, and a beautiful younger sister who is already there, dancing with your best friend. All your friends are just like yourself, sowing their wild oats, and your wise father approves but reminds you that moderation is everything. If you want to become a painter or a playwright, instead of going into the family's lumber business, that's fine too, and even in faraway Notting Hill, you know that you'll be supported and coddled as long as necessary. And let us not forget your grandmother, who is always there for you with her *pasta al forno*.

Indeed, what march to progress can there be when, 20 years later, you are a *vip*, dining at Raya on Panarea of a summer's night, and your sister is married to your best friend, and your mother still phones you four times a day, and you've long since diversified your family business and now own the company that manufactures newsprint for *Corriere della Sera*? Of course, their society reporters know you, and their photographers take pictures of you for the gossip column, and everyone in Milan says, "You know, I saw him at Raya. *Un night bellissimo*. Yes, it was *pieno di vip*." And then the ignorant foreigners, from *Paris Match* and *Harper's & Queen* hear all this, and repeat like parrots: "VIP! VIP! Just like Ibiza! But the food is Italian! *Bellissimo*!"

Ask me if I'm dreaming. Ask me if this is an old episode of *Father Knows Best*, or a chapter of *Doctor Zhivago*, or some other, still more fanciful, idealization of the good life in the eye of the proletarian hurricane. No, I tell you. This really is the truth. This really is how nice children play. This is the last cigar in Moscow. This is Italy.

Andrei Navrozov is Chronicles' *European correspondent.*

Letter From Texas

by Wayne Allensworth

The Season of Rain and Death

◆

A blood-red sun is setting on the horizon, distant but familiar, dull but glowing, like the bloodshot eye of a wounded Titan. Layers of pasty-blue, thin, translucent clouds drape the blood-eye image, as if they themselves were the misty, cloud-like shimmerings of heat rising from the sunbaked pavement, cooled by a late-summer rain. I stand transfixed by the red orb's terrible beauty, framed in a border of scrubby trees and mesquite bushes, still damp from the week of heavy rains that have mercifully soaked the parched ground that had come to look strangely like the surface of distant Mars: Deep canal-like channels showed through the thinning grass, imitating the look of cooling lava. The grass has been grateful, miraculously transforming itself from clumps of brown death to a wide expanse of green life in the space of a few days.

Drought had followed a wet, gloriously green spring, as if Providence were reminding us of the transitory nature of terrestrial life, but now the rains have come again. And the temperature has hovered well below 100 degrees for more than a week, a harbinger of the almost imperceptible Texas fall.

Gradually, the moon rises, and the faint clouds dissipate into the encroaching darkness. The moon's dark continents float in a sea of milky ocean, the glow from the surrounding towns' lights throwing a splash of purple into the inky night that encircles the moon, accentuating the sky's transformation.

The blare of the loudspeakers brings me back to the here and now: It's almost time for the bull riders to test their mettle, the event we have all been waiting for, especially the kids. It is fair season in Texas.

Earlier, we were visiting the exhibits, the little ones petting prize-winning livestock and runners-up now fated to the pen or the butcher's knife, when my kids spotted a pair of cowboys at the BBQ stand. Do they ride bulls? The kids want to know, so the reluctant, grinning trio meekly shuffles over to the two men, one tall and broad-shouldered (he looked like a steer wrestler to me), the other short and wiry (more like the build of a bull rider), both sunburned and dressed in the uniform of the rodeo cowboy: battered Stetson, yoked shirt, leather belt set off by a buckle the size of a TV screen (perhaps a trophy from a past victory), and jeans tucked into Western boots. The tall man smiles but says nothing, nodding to his partner to answer. No, he says, no bulls, not anymore—too beat up for that. But the two are part of a three-man team that competes later in the wild-horse race, a mad scramble to saddle a very unwilling horse and race to the finish line ahead of a competing team. It was not to be a lucky night for our cowboys: The horse won the contest of strength and will, our wiry friend taking a beating against the fence in a vain attempt to mount the beast as his competitor raced to the finish line. The bulls won, too, that night:

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None of the cowboys made the eight-second ride. My son was disappointed. My two girls, though, were excited to meet Miss Rodeo Texas, a pretty young lady with a friendly smile, decked out in a suit of lights that would have put Porter Wagoner to shame. My boy tugged at my shirttail, telling me he wanted some chaps.

After the rodeo, we see our wiry friend, still grinning, limping on a game leg and sipping a can of beer. The tall man approaches, and the two undefeated cowboys amble off into the dark. Maybe next time.

Across the fairgrounds, Charlie Robison of Bandera, Texas, belts out one of his bluesy, hard-edged tunes about misspent lives, work in the oil patch, booze, crime, and bad women. His gritty music reminds me of Johnny Cash serenading the cons of Folsom Prison or of the tragic wailing of Hank Williams and Lefty Frizzell. But Charlie has a sense of humor, too. Even his sad songs are funny at times, and his lampoon of the old tear-in-my-beer standbys of country music ("You're not the best, but you're the best that I can do . . . "), altered to include an hilarious, PG-13 jab at Bill Clinton, is a real crowd-pleaser. Charlie brushes back his tousled mane and keeps on, a music man singing uncompromising songs about real life, living on his family's old South Texas ranch. In his way, he seems as heroic as the cowboy with the game leg.

Two weeks later, the kids and I are back for more, this time standing on the Hamilton, Texas, town square, facing the courthouse, awaiting a parade. The rains washed out the first night of the Hamilton County ("The Dove Capital of the World") Dove Festival, Fair, and Rodeo, but the county has turned out in force on Labor Day weekend for the big parade: The sun is back, as if it had been teasing us, shrouding itself in the sheath of a gray-black storm front, now glaring and melting the thin clouds like butter in a skillet. We swelter and smile. The Hamilton Bulldog band is followed by a mounted troop of cavalry ("The Horse Detachment of the 1st Cavalry Division") from Fort Hood, the stern young men's deadpan faces turning to broad smiles as they unsheathe their saddle guns and fire a volley into the pale-blue sky. Though solid and substantial, they have an air about them of ghost riders, shadows from the past flickering across our collective sight path and then disappearing, like the white-bearded man in gray from the Hamilton County Sons of Confederate Veterans who flits through the crowd, preaching rebellion and Southern heritage.

We are passing through the antique car show (the maroon '57 Chevy was a real peach) when the accident happens: One of the riders in the parade has been seriously injured, his horse slipping and falling, the loud, clear voice of the parade's loudspeaker momentarily drowned out by the wail of the ambulance's sirens. We pray for his safety, wipe the sweat from our brows, and wonder if the rains will come back.

Wayne Allensworth, a native Texan, resides in Keller, Texas.

Letter From Lynden

by Jeremy Lott

A Brilliant, Fading Bliss

◆

Trekking north along the closest major artery, Canada-bound travelers are treated to a small hotel with a decorative windmill, several car dealerships, and a shopping center with a McDonald's, a Blockbuster, and a Subway—all common manifestations of the *Pax Americana*. Then, however, they reach a graveyard.

Bisected by Front Street, the bricked-in cemetery with decorative iron bars is the first landmark people see that bears the sign "Lynden"—one on each side of the street. Not "Welcome to . . . " with a grandiosely narrow claim differentiating it from other towns ("the world's largest manufacturer of grilled cheese"). Just "Lynden," take it or leave it. A visiting missionary recently thumbed his nose at the city's decision to place the bus depot just east of the graveyard: "Where I come from, they put busses where the people are. They had the right idea but forgot to check for a pulse."

He was quite wrong: The graveyard has a pulse all its own. The ebb and flow of the seasons brings a steady stream of families to lay flowers on the graves and to remember and to pray. While dead men don't tell tales, their mourners do.

I'm a recent enough immigrant, with an outsider's distance still intact, so I go there to disconfirm an old wives' tale. Driving my Pontiac Sunbird up and down the rows of tombstones, a familiar pattern emerges. On the south side, the marble is etched with a certain kind of name: Price, McTavin, Johnson. To the north: Bovenkamp, DeBoer, VanderKam. My jaw drops: The old wives were right, at least with regard to that departed generation: *If you ain't Dutch, you ain't much.*

Most moderns shy away from their dead: too depressing, too macabre, too vivid a reminder of our duties and failures. But Lyndeners, through an accident of geography or grace, send ours ahead of us to meet the world. It makes an odd sort of sense. We are fierce democrats—small "d"—and staunch traditionalists, and what is tradition but Chesterton's democracy of the dead?

Lynden, by reputation, is a thoroughly Dutch Reformed town. The new version of the yellow pages—plaid, actually—confirms what any fool with legs, eyes, and an hour to kill can observe. At least 12 Reformed churches; one Lutheran; one (ugly) Catholic church; one Nazarene; one Baptist; one Evangelical Free; one Assemblies of God; a couple of "non-denominationals"; a United Methodist church on the utter outskirts of town ("personally diverse; unified in the faith"); no Mormons, Unitarians, Christian Scientists, or Jehovah's Witnesses. Muslims, Sikhs, and Buddhists need not apply.

Public schools struggle to pass levies because as many as half of the local children attend the Reformed Lynden Christian Schools—nursery, elementary, middle, and high. It is also common for parents to homeschool their children for a few years—to get to know them better or to avoid particularly bad teachers.

As a result, the public-school system—whose superintendent goes to my own Baptist church—tends to resist the wackier trends in the field and be more receptive to parents' input. That doesn't necessarily make for a world-class education. Lynden youths, with their mocking assurances that "I gredeeated frum Linden [Lynden High School]," prove that hicks can be ironic, too. In the main, however, they get an education and aren't passed on just for the fun of it, which is more than can be said in most communities.

The influence of the Reformed churches has diminished some over this past decade as the population roughly tripled—to within spitting distance of 10,000 in

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the town and surrounding area—without a corresponding tripling in church attendance. Certainly, the pulpits couldn't muster the same collective pique that roiled Lynden in the first decade of the 20th century: a total war between the "wets" and the "drys" that resulted in two ties for the mayoral race and two different city governments in 1904—an election that, much like the most recent presidential contretemps, had to be resolved by court order.

Then again, it is uncertain that the ministers would need to agitate. Not all Lyndeners are strict teetotalers, but our one tavern recently closed, at least partly because of a lack of business. The town so frowns on wastrels that the boozers tend to migrate to nearby Bellingham, where they can bother the students of Western Washington University for a dollar. When asked what field he wanted to pursue, my brother's classmate quipped that he wanted to become "Lynden's first bum." Good luck: My guess is that he would starve to death.

This isn't to say that there aren't new problems. For many years, raspberries and milk were Lynden's main products, and they have been disrupted by wild price fluctuations brought on by international markets. (The sanctions surrounding the war in Kosovo allowed enough breathing room to turn some raspberry growers into raging neoconservatives—at least temporarily.) In keeping with the traditions of the Dutch farmer settlers, there are very few Lyndeners—including this one—who haven't milked cows, hayed, picked berries, or worked in the canneries. For some, this work provides mad money to blow on cotton candy and roller-coaster rides at the annual Lynden Fair. For others, it's the difference between making the mortgage and not.

So people are seeking employment in Lynden's one growth industry: dotage. On the golf courses, in restaurants and nursing homes, the youths who stick around are helping our largest immigrant group, wealthy retirees, to stave off boredom and further deterioration—for a hefty price, of course.

Except for the healthy restaurants—these Dutch are pro-gluttony—most local businesses have to be lean and mean to cut it. The picaresque downtown is turning into a ghost town as new firms and shopping centers sprawl outward to meet the needs and wants of a larger, less-focused population. This prompted the great Haggen controversy of the last few years. The Haggen supermarket chain approached the city council about buying a plot of land in the downtown area upon which they could erect one of their yuppie marts. It was a dream come true with one long string attached: The chain would be open on Sundays.

A few businesses are open on Sundays, including one of the two grocery stores, but such Sabbath-breaking is frowned upon. The second supermarket is kept alive largely by people who quietly boycott the first. We are not strict sabbatarians, but Sunday, broadly speaking, is a day of rest: Lawns go unmowed, cars aren't washed, a goodly number feel the need to attend some sort of worship service, and the core of the town is almost silent. Lyndeners understood that Haggen's presence would change that. So there was an old fashioned dustup, with countless reversals of position on the city council, mailboxes of angry letters to the local paper, and an abortive search to find another chain that would not open on Sunday. In the end, Haggen threw up its hands and headed elsewhere. The downtown merchants screamed bloody murder about the "backward, anti-business environment" of the town and then went back to their antique shops.

The Haggen rejection is less of a victory—for Luddism or common decency, depending on your point of view—than it might seem at first blush. Opposite the open-on-Sunday supermarket stands a construction site for a brand new Safeway. The two Sabbath-breakers will probably put the Sabbath-keeper out of business. So modernity wins again, but not totally and not without a fight. The core will still be silent on Sunday, and there is a relatively new, shiny, Sunday-compliant family grocery that people may flock to.

This, in its own small way, highlights what I love about this town. It's conservative enough to respect the past and pragmatic (and Calvinist) enough to accommodate human nature. We Lyndeners welcome modernity at our own pace. The hysterical warnings of the local business interests are politely listened to and then weighted accordingly. Best of all, our impressions are not just so much Oprahfied mush. But, there is something more, something that struck me in a passage by Stephen Fry:

> [A]s I understand it, [Christ's] triumph on earth rests on the fact that he was fully a man. God, the argument runs, abdicated all his divinity and made himself one hundred per cent flesh. He ate food therefore, he wept, suffered, slept, went to the lavatory and in all other ways sustained the thousand natural shocks the flesh is heir to. Christians have no right, if they accept this story, to rail at God and say "you don't know what it's like, being a human," the Christian story is all about God showing that he did find out precisely what it was like, and thereby offering us an opportunity of salvation.

Quite so. To Lyndeners, Dutch or otherwise, this is a familiar sentiment that we carry with us as we enter into the world.

Jeremy Lott is senior editor of Spintech Magazine.

The Rockford Institute
will host a dinner featuring

Count Nikolai Tolstoy

on January 23 at 7:00 P.M.
at Holy Resurrection Serbian Orthodox Cathedral
5701 N. Redwood Drive, Chicago.

Tolstoy, a relative of the Russian novelist, is famous in his own right for his courageous exposure of "Operation Keelhaul"—the forced repatriation of unarmed civilians and anticommunist resistance fighters by the Allies in 1945. Reread Sally Wright's piece in the April 1989 issue, Anthony Harrigan's in the February 1995 issue, and Srdja Trifkovic's "Lord Aldington: Dead but no R.I.P." at *www.ChroniclesMagazine.org*.

For an invitation to the dinner,
call Christopher Check, executive vice president, at (815) 964-5811.

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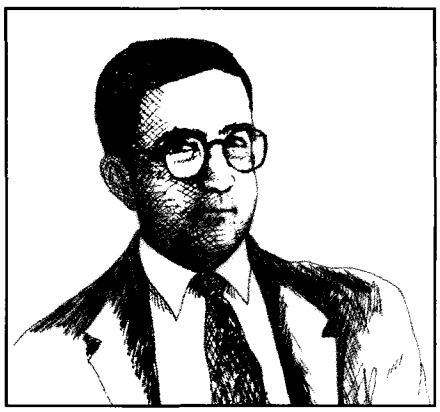
by Srdja Trifkovic

Afghanistan and Oil



Writing in the *New York Times* on September 26, Paul Krugman insisted that the war against Afghanistan would not be "a war on behalf of the oil companies; not even a war on behalf of SUVs and McMansions." It was, though, going to be a war "over a natural resource that is more vital than any corporation's profits or anyone's luxurious consumption." We should not quarrel about whose oil is at stake, Krugman insisted; it is about *our* oil.

We were led to believe that this was a war for freedom, justice, democracy, and all that, and against terrorism, Osama, and the Taliban. The organ of the establishment then calmly implies that the key to understanding it all is the world's largest untapped reserve of oil and gas in the recently independent Central Asian republics. Nobody attacks the columnist, and the paper carries no apology for his cynical distortion. What is going on?

Apparently, the claim that it is "all about oil" is no news to the rest of the world. The *Daily Telegraph* of London, among others, says that "Control of Central Asia's oil is the real goal." This was the headline on a report by Ben Aris in Moscow and Ahmed Rashid in Lahore (October 23):

> One of the main reasons that Washington supported the Taliban between 1994 and 1997 was the attempt by the U.S. oil giant Unocal to build a gas pipeline from Turkmenistan, through Taliban-controlled southern Afghanistan, to Pakistan and the Persian Gulf . . . But when peace and a stable government eventually comes to Kabul, US oil companies will be looking closely at Afghanistan because it offers the shortest route to the Gulf for Central Asia's vast quantities of untapped oil and gas. The companies have invested . . . $59 billion in developing oil and gas fields in Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan and Azerbaijan but exporting to the West involves lengthy and expensive pipelines.

This view was echoed by the *Asia Times* of New Delhi, which suggests that, while

> the "great game" in Afghanistan was once about czars and commissars seeking access to the warm water ports of the Persian Gulf, today it is about laying oil and gas pipelines to the untapped petroleum reserves of Central Asia . . .

As evidence, it cites a study by the Institute for Afghan Studies, which "placed the total worth of oil and gas reserves in the Central Asian republics at around US $3 trillion."

Afghanistan is not just the key to pipelines connecting Central Asia to international markets; the country has its own huge oil and gas deposits. During the Soviet occupation, Moscow estimated Afghanistan's natural-gas reserves at around five trillion cubic feet, and production reached 275 million cubic feet per day in the mid-1970's. But sabotage by the *mujahideen* and the civil war that followed Soviet withdrawal in 1989 virtually ended gas production and scuttled deals for the supply of gas to several European countries. According to a report by the U.S. Department of Energy that was posted only a week before September 11 (*www.eia.doe.gov/emeu/cabs/afghan.html*):

> Afghanistan's significance from an energy standpoint stems from its geographical position as a potential transit route for oil and natural gas exports from Central Asia to the Arabian Sea. This potential includes the possible construction of oil and natural gas export pipelines through Afghanistan, which was under serious consideration in the mid-1990s. The idea has since been undermined by Afghanistan's instability.

But, as *Telegraph* correspondent Ahmed Rashid, explained in *Taliban: Militant Islam, Oil and Fundamentalism in Central Asia* (Yale, 2000), this instability is largely the result of the machinations of U.S. policymakers and oil companies as they tried to secure access to energy supplies in the midst of Afghanistan's protracted civil war. After providing billions of dollars worth of arms to the *mujahideen*, the United States walked away after Soviet troops withdrew in 1989 and gave its allies in the region, Pakistan and Saudi Arabia, free rein to sort out the ensuing civil war. This allowed all regional powers, including the newly independent Central Asian republics, to prop up competing warlords, thereby escalating the war. Between 1994 and 1996, Rashid says, the United States supported the Taliban (through its allies Pakistan and Saudi Arabia) because it was viewed as anti-Iranian and anti-Shia, and chose to ignore the Taliban's own fundamentalist agenda: "When I first spoke to diplomats at the US Embassy in Islamabad after the Taliban emerged in 1994, they were enthusiastic." Three years later, another American diplomat told Rashid, "The Taliban will probably develop like the Saudis did. There will be Aramco pipelines, an emir, no parliament, and lots of Sharia law. We can live with that."

That enthusiasm soon translated into commercial ventures. After the Taliban took Kabul in September 1996, London's *Daily Telegraph* reported that

> the dream of securing a pipeline across Afghanistan is the main reason why Pakistan, a close political ally of America's, has been so supportive of the Taliban, and why America has quietly acquiesced in its conquest of Afghanistan.

In February 1997, a group of Taliban leaders was brought to Unocal headquarters at Sugarland, Texas (near Houston), for a whirlwind tour, complete with royal corporate hospitality. Two months later, the company opened a project office in

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Kandahar, the seat of Taliban power. The U.S. government wanted Unocal to build the oil and gas pipelines through Afghanistan so that the vast untapped oil and gas reserves in Central Asia and the Caspian Basin could be brought to world markets. The very people we are now carpetbombing were courted to secure the deal.

On June 1, 1997, Bombay's *Indian Express* reported that, even as the Taliban were securing their control over Afghanistan, American multinational companies were trying to secure the Islamic militia's support for the pipelines. Once the mullahs were firmly in control in Kabul and in most of the rest of the country, a press release from Unocal (*www.unocal.com/uclnews/97news/102797a.htm*) reported that

> Six international companies and the Government of Turkmenistan formed *Central Asia Gas Pipeline, Ltd.* (CentGas) . . . to build a 790-mile . . . pipeline to link Turkmenistan's abundant proven natural gas reserves with growing markets in Pakistan. The group is also considering an extension of the line to the New Delhi area in India. . . . Unocal was appointed by the Government of Turkmenistan to lead the project development activities and form the gas pipeline consortium. . . . The 48-inch diameter pipeline will extend from the Afghanistan-Turkmenistan border, generally follow the Herat-to-Kandahar Road through Afghanistan, cross the Pakistan border in the vicinity of Quetta, and terminate in Multan, Pakistan, where it will tie into an existing pipeline system.

In the second week of December 1997, another Taliban delegation, led by Mullah Muhammad Ghaus, came to Houston. Its itinerary included a dinner at the home of Unocal Vice President Marty Miller. Reuters reported the visit on December 13, a day before the *Sunday Telegraph* carried a detailed story by Caroline Lees ("Oil Barons Court Taliban in Texas"). In January 1998, the Taliban signed an agreement that would allow the pipeline project to proceed.

In March 1998, however, Unocal announced a delay because of the revived civil war in Afghanistan. Unocal executives hoped that the halt would be temporary: Only a few weeks earlier, John Maresca, Unocal's head of international relations, told a congressional hearing that sanctions against Iran meant that Afghanistan remained "the only other possible route" for Caspian oil. Following the August 1998 bombing of two U.S. embassies in East Africa and the subsequent Cruise-missile attack on alleged terrorist camps in Afghanistan, Unocal announced that it would not proceed unless "an internationally recognized government" was in power in Kabul.

Throughout that year, Unocal also came under fire from feminist groups in the United States who were opposed to any deal with a regime that practices "gender apartheid" toward women. In December 1998, with oil prices at a relative low, Unocal finally suspended its participation in the proposed Centgas consortium.

Three years later, if the United States manages to install "an internationally recognized government" in Kabul following the current bombing campaign, Unocal's wish may finally come true. There is increasing evidence that the U.S. government may have intended to intervene in Afghanistan even before the September 11 terrorist attacks. The BBC reported this on September 18 ("US planned attack on Taleban," by George Arney), and on September 22, the London *Guardian* carried a report headlined "Threat of US strikes passed to Taliban weeks before NY attack":

> Osama bin Laden and the Taliban received threats of possible American military strikes against them two months before the terrorist assaults on New York and Washington . . . [This] raises the possibility that Bin Laden, far from launching the attacks on the World Trade Centre in New York and the Pentagon out of the blue . . . was launching a pre-emptive strike in response to what he saw as US threats.

The *Guardian* rounded up the story on October 23 ("America's Pipe Dream," by George Monbiot; *www.guardian.co.uk/Archive/Article/0,4273,4278871,00.html*):

> In 1998, Dick Cheney, now US vice-president but then chief executive of a major oil services company, remarked: "I cannot think of a time when we have had a region emerge as suddenly to become as strategically significant as the Caspian." But the oil and gas there is worthless until it is moved. The only route that makes both political and economic sense is through Afghanistan . . . For the first year of Taliban rule, US policy towards the regime appears to have been determined principally by Unocal's interests . . . Given that the US government is dominated by former oil industry executives, we would be foolish to suppose that such plans no longer figure in its strategic thinking.

Monbiot concludes that, if the United States succeeds in replacing the Taliban with a stable and grateful pro-Western government, and if the United States then binds the economies of central Asia to that of its ally Pakistan, it will have crushed not only terrorism but the growing ambitions of both Russia and China: "Afghanistan, as ever, is the key to the western domination of Asia."

The *Daily Mirror*'s John Pilger had a similar but somewhat more sanguine view of the proceedings ("Hidden Agenda Behind War on Terror," October 29):

> Only if the pipeline runs through Afghanistan can the Americans hope to control it. . . . Colin Powell is now referring to "moderate" Taliban, who will join an American-sponsored "loose federation" to run Afghanistan. The "war on terrorism" is . . . a means of achieving American strategic aims that lie behind the flag-waving façade of great power.

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LIBERAL ARTS

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"SOLUTION: Grow some!"
—*from a press release from the National Theatre of the Deaf*

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ECONOMICS

Tracts Against Capitalism

by Mark Royden Winchell

Peaceful Valley is a bucolic residential neighborhood in Clemson, South Carolina. The middle-class homeowners who live there are not land speculators hoping to turn a profit. Many are like Kathleen Dickel, a 50-year-old high-school German teacher, who owns a two-story contemporary house with a deck surrounded on two sides by deep woods. Kathleen stained the deck herself. She eats her meals and does her schoolwork out there, and she watches the leaves change colors in the fall. "There are fireflies here like I have never seen anywhere in my life," she recently told a reporter for the *Greenville News*. Unfortunately, this pleasant life—and Peaceful Valley itself—may soon be a thing of the past.

Despite the availability of three commercially zoned locations in Clemson, Wal-Mart is intent on setting up shop next to Peaceful Valley. Instead of seeing a slope of woods and ravines in back of her house, Kathleen Dickel may soon see a 60-foot-high retaining wall. Sitting on her deck, she will not see the sun after four o'clock. Nor will she see the stars at night—only floodlights from the Wal-Mart parking lot. And the quiet she has come to treasure will be drowned out by the sound of big trucks pulling in and out, not to mention the shoppers who will crowd the streets near her house. Not surprisingly, Kathleen and many of her neighbors are fighting what many consider the irresistible tide of progress.

What side should a conservative take in this dispute? Those who believe that conservatism was defined once and for all by the Austrian economists would have no difficulty answering that question: Wal-Mart wants to buy the property in question, and the current owner is eager to sell. In a society where the free market reigns supreme, the homeowners in the vicinity would have only two options: Learn to live with the new state of affairs, or move. Those local merchants who fear being put out of business have even less cause for complaint. If they can't compete with the corporate behemoth from Arkansas, they should find some other livelihood. All that stands in the way of the market working its will are zoning laws, the "intrusive hand of government." Whatever you might think about this controversy, most local observers are convinced that all "conservatives" are allied with Sam Walton's heirs.

There is, of course, a counter-tradition on the right. Those who do not regard the market as sacred realize that it is necessary to make a *life*, as well as a living. Although such a conservative vision has many sources, one that seems particularly relevant to the dilemma of Peaceful Valley is that of the Nashville Agrarians and their fellow economic decentralists of the 1930's. Derided in their own time as reactionary dreamers (several were actually poets), the Agrarians now seem more like prophets who recognized the social drawbacks of unbridled industrialism when just about everybody else could see only the bottom line. Although neither they nor their opponents realized it at the time, the Agrarians were actually more radical than the communist and socialist critics of industrial capitalism. Marxists, after all, were willing to accept capitalism as a necessary phase in the evolution of society toward socialism. The Agrarians saw both capitalism and socialism as dangerous examples of economic centralization. Rather than move through and beyond capitalism (as the communists wanted to do), the Agrarians advocated a "third way," which was not only noncommunist but pre-capitalist.

Considering only their attacks on industrialism, I cannot help being struck by some unintended affinities between Agrarian and Marxist thought. Although he does not mention capitalism by name, much of Donald Davidson's social criticism in the late 1920's laments the condition of the alienated worker, who controls neither the source nor the fruits of his labor. This was a theme that had been sounded by Southern traditionalists for nearly a century before the stock market crash of 1929. (I think of William J. Grayson's poem "The Hireling and the Slave" and even of the arguments of Augustine St. Clare, the benevolent slaveholder in Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin*.) As Eugene Genovese notes:

> In the Old South, outstanding political and intellectual figures denounced capitalism ("the free labor system") as a brutal, immoral, irresponsible wage-slavery in which the masters of capital exploited and impoverished their workers without assuming personal responsibility for them.

Making a similar point in the *Communist Manifesto*, Marx and Engels wrote:

> The bourgeoisie, wherever it has got the upper hand, has put an end to all feudal, patriarchal, idyllic relations. It has pitilessly torn asunder the . . . feudal ties that bound man to his "natural superiors."

Their quarrel with industrial capitalism was so fundamental that several of the Agrarians were actually afraid of being mistaken as red or, at least, pink. Preparing to publish their manifesto in 1930, three of them—Allen Tate, Robert Penn Warren, and Andrew Lytle—actually wanted to call it *Tracts Against Communism*. Although this title was rejected as largely irrelevant to the central concerns of the volume (which was already being advertised as *I'll Take My Stand*), it would at least have made the point that economic centralization (both public and private) was the enemy. Questioning the supremacy of capitalism did not mean embracing a collectivist alternative.

Ironically, if the Agrarians had been read primarily as opponents of capitalism, their ideas would probably have been taken more seriously in an intellectual community heavily populated with socialists and fellow travelers. Instead, they were denounced as romantic Luddites seeking to roll back the Industrial Revolution. With no funding, no charismatic political leader, and no publisher interested in a sequel to *I'll Take My Stand*, the Agrarian movement seemed dead in the water by the early 1930's. Then, apparent salvation arrived in the person of a New York editor named Seward Collins. On March 8, 1933, Col-

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lins wrote a long letter to Donald Davidson describing his plans for a new magazine, which would soon be called the *American Review*. A man of extreme but transitory enthusiasms, Collins gave the Agrarians *carte blanche* to publish whatever they wished in his new magazine. For the next three years, the *American Review* became, in effect, the Agrarian magazine of record.

As promising as it might have seemed at the outset, the connection between the Agrarians and the *American Review* soon began to sour because of Seward Collins' increasingly open flirtation with fascism. By 1936, the Agrarians felt compelled to dissociate themselves from Collins and his magazine, and they began desperately looking for a new forum. At that point, Allen Tate joined forces with Herbert Agar, the foremost American proponent of the British Distributist movement, to organize a broadly based symposium attacking monopoly ownership. The revolutionary character of the resulting anthology is suggested by its title—*Who Owns America? A New Declaration of Independence*.

Despite differences in nationality and cultural heritage, the Agrarians shared several key principles with their new allies. Like the Twelve Southerners, the Distributists (G.K. Chesterton, Hilaire Belloc, *et al.*) were dismayed by the corrosive effect of industrialism and the greater centralization of economic power under corporate capitalism. Rather than following the path of the Fabian socialists, they advocated a restoration of the medieval guilds. They envisioned a society of subsistence farmers working their own land and of urban laborers owning their small factories. Perhaps because they were overwhelmingly Roman Catholic in a land where Catholics were in the minority, the Distributists attributed much of what they detested in capitalism to the acquisitive spirit of Protestant individualism.

Sixty-five years after the publication of *Who Owns America?*, it is clearer than ever how far the position of the Agrarians and Distributists deviates from the worship of *laissez-faire* economics that now passes for conservatism. Not only were these decentralists distrustful of capitalism, they were willing to use the powers of the federal government to redistribute property and income in a more equitable manner. In his essay, "Big Business and the Property State," Lyle Lanier (who had also contributed to *I'll Take My Stand*) stops short of advocating government ownership of the means of production, but he does encourage increasing government regulation of business and even amending the Constitution to achieve that goal. Such regulation was accomplished by the New Deal after a few timely deaths on the Supreme Court made changing the Constitution unnecessary. When the surviving Agrarians gathered in 1980 to celebrate the 50th anniversary of *I'll Take My Stand*, Lanier was praising Barry Commoner, the presidential candidate of the ultra-left-wing Citizen's Party.

We tend to think that the most important distinction in economic philosophy is between those who favor the collective ownership of the means of production and distribution and those who advocate private ownership. In his contribution to *Who Owns America?*, Allen Tate argues that a far more important distinction should be made between concentrated and widely distributed property. Big business has tried to rally small property owners to its cause by maintaining the illusion that all property rights are essentially the same. For small property owners, however, the right to property involves both legal and effective ownership—not only the right to sell, but the right to *use* what you own. This is clearly not the case for the small stockholder in a large corporation. The piece of paper that gives him part ownership in that corporation might produce dividends in flush times, but it gives him no real voice in the way his property is used. For that reason, Tate agrees with Marx that corporate capitalism is the necessary and inevitable prelude to communism.

"The collectivist State," writes Tate,

> is the logical development of giant corporate ownership, and, if it comes, it will signalize the final triumph of Big Business. "All the arts," said Walter Pater, "strive toward the condition of music." Corporate structure strives toward the condition of Moscow.

(As a practical matter, the communists could much more easily take over an economy that was already centralized than one in which property was widely dispersed.) Viewed in this light, a Jeffersonian economy would not be a *via media* between Hamiltonianism and communism or communism and fascism but the opposite extreme of all these various faces of collectivism. Tate summarizes his position in the following maxims: "Ownership and control is property. Ownership without control is slavery because control without ownership is tyranny."

Although the New Deal eventually accomplished many of the things that the authors of *Who Owns America?* recommended, it did not halt the greater centralization of the economy. Instead, it simply widened the source of centralization to include the public as well as the private sector. As a result, the Agrarians' cautious support of Roosevelt began to diminish. The economic decentralists had naively believed that they could use the coercive power of the federal government to control the excesses of untrammeled industrialism without paying a stiff price in personal liberty and local sovereignty. When the welfare state in Washington did not wither away any more quickly than the dictatorship of the proletariat in Moscow did, the battle against industrialism was widened to include an attack on all the tentacles of Leviathan, both public and private.

As radical as their economic prescriptions might have seemed at the time, the Agrarians and Distributists believed that they would ultimately serve a conservative purpose. This thesis is suggested by the title of Andrew Lytle's essay, "The Small Farm Secures the State." A nation of small landowners is by nature socially conservative, he argues. The small farm is "a form of property . . . that the average man can understand, can enjoy, and will defend. Patriotism to such a man has a concrete basis. He will fight for his farm in the face of foreign or domestic peril." To maintain such an environment, Lytle concludes,

> should be the important end of polity, for only when families are fixed in their habits, sure of their property, hopeful for the security of their children, jealous of liberties which they cherish, can the State keep the middle course between impotence and tyranny.

Because it was more concrete and specific than *I'll Take My Stand*, *Who Owns America?* was also more vulnerable to criticism. Long before the dawn of the new millennium, it was clear that industrialism had won an irreversible victory. Today, when we think of American agriculture, we are likely to envision not the family farm but Archer Daniels Midland.

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Perhaps Agrarianism really is merely a movement of antiquarian interest or an extended metaphor in the literary imagination. Still, yesterday's battles (especially those that were waged on principle) have a way of reemerging in a slightly different form. Economic centralization is as much a threat today as it was in the 1930's. Worse yet, it has taken on the even more ominous character of the multinational corporation. If nationalism is the enemy of regionalism, then the global economy threatens to destroy the integrity and sovereignty of nations themselves. When corporations move American jobs overseas, entire communities can be destroyed. And, as the residents of Peaceful Valley have discovered, even an all-American retailer such as Wal-Mart can wreak havoc with settled ways of life.

If money is not the root of all evil, size may be. I sometimes think that most of the oppression and depravity in the world today is the result of large institutions—whether big business, big labor, big religion, big education, big entertainment, or big government. Consider, for example, the massacre at Columbine High School in Colorado. Some people place the blame on the ready availability of guns. Others point a finger at rock music and video games. I suspect Bill Kauffman was right when he argued in *Chronicles* (*Cultural Revolutions*, July 1999) that the very hugeness of the school made it possible for a couple of disturbed children to remain anonymous and invisible until they shot their way into our consciousness. We cannot destroy huge institutions, nor can we hope to reform them. Perhaps, however, we can establish communities that are less dependent on these malignant outside forces.

It is this desire for community that has prompted the worldwide push for devolution. Whether it be the breakaway states of the old Soviet Union, the separatist forces in Quebec, or the Tenth Amendment movement in this country, people are showing an increasing antipathy toward the huge impersonal forces that seek to control their lives. In addition to their own nationalist flags, these warriors often display the defiant battle flag of the Confederacy. (The Quebec separatists have told Clyde Wilson that, if they ever win their independence from Canada, they will play "Dixie" at the victory party.) The traditional South, which seemed dead in the 20th century, may yet rise again in the 21st. More than any other group of intellectuals, the Nashville Agrarians defined the nature of community for our time. Not only is this the cause of the South, but as Alexander Stephens observed so many years ago, it is truly the cause of us all.

Mark Royden Winchell is the author of Where No Flag Flies: Donald Davidson and the Southern Resistance *and other books.*

Capitalism and Civilization

by Paul Gottfried

Michael Novak has repeatedly argued (recently, in a lecture here at Elizabethtown College) that our economic system is "permanently attached to a Judeo-Christian culture," but history suggests otherwise. Although capitalism developed within a Christian culture, it has also actively undermined that culture's moral and spiritual foundations, as the use of the market by the entertainment industry shows. Nihilistic sentimentalists can profit in our society by selling their opinions as movies, as surely as do those who print and distribute the Bible. But that does not prove that capitalists must aid the forces of social disintegration or that the free market inherently favors those forces. The "capitalist system" is neither the sworn enemy nor the firm friend of social/cultural traditionalists. It does not operate in a political vacuum, nor do those who pursue profit necessarily believe in any particular worldview.

It has long been assumed that political centralization and economic development are necessarily related. The larger industrialized economies become, the more they require political control to sustain themselves and to develop further. Such a connection has seemed axiomatic to such diverse analysts as Gary Becker, Karl Marx, and Michael Novak, who have all argued that economic modernization presupposes highly centralized and ideologically homogeneous regimes. This argument is not confined to the Marxist left but has cropped up at least as often among defenders of capitalism and 19th-century bourgeois nationalists. While Ben Wattenberg and Charles Krauthammer might disagree with national liberals of the German Second Empire about the kind of regime that should be imposed, all of them would agree that the global expansion of their political systems would be good for economic growth.

This conventional assumption about economic prosperity and political centralization is, at best, an overstatement. More likely, it is an effort to modify group behavior by associating a desired political outcome with economic benefits. Those who fancy a particular regime—whether American-style "global democracy" or a quasiconstitutional German empire under the King of Prussia—and desire its expansion have cited material advantages to promote their political project.

By the time I was a graduate student in the 1960's, multiple dissertations had already been written supposedly demonstrating that German capitalists were pursuing economic advantage by backing German unification. This thesis is either tautological or false. Every capitalist hopes to maximize his advantage and, unless behaving quite irrationally, will try to avoid public stances that may harm his material interests. But capitalists who associated themselves with Bismarck and his allies, as well as German industrialists who went along with Hitler, were not free to pursue optimal material advantages. They were reacting to the historical situation they found, jumping on board a moving train already full of noncapitalist interests.

Austrian social economist Joseph Schumpeter drew a distinction between the historical circumstances in which the European bourgeoisie operated (which came from a pre-middle-class past) and what that bourgeoisie might have done if it had been able to act more freely. Seen in this light, the German bourgeoisie were eager to have industrial and financial development but not necessarily the protectionist Bismarckian empire that came along in 1871. In any case, much of the protectionist baggage assumed by that government was placed there by the aggressive landed interests that accompanied the birth of the Second Empire.

To the extent that German capitalists backed imperial consolidation, many of them did so for patriotic reasons, not because German political unification was necessarily in their economic interest. In a perceptive study of 19th-century German liberals, *Die Partei der Freiheit* (Stuttgart: Lucius, 1999), historian Ralph Raico demonstrates this point in painful detail. Examining the Freihändel-Partei, grouped in Berlin in the 1850's around

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the figures of John Prince-Smith and Otto Michelis, Raico shows how an originally anarcho-capitalist faction moved away from libertarian economics toward nationalist and unificationist positions by the mid-1860's. This *volte face*, argues Raico, was not driven by any coherent perception of capitalist interest. It took place because of despair about reforming the political climate, fear of a socialist revolution promoted by universal male suffrage, and, finally, the widespread patriotic enthusiasm that followed the achievement of German unification. But none of these motives, according to Raico, was produced by capitalist economic interest or particularly tight economic reasoning. The Freihändler were reacting to an historical context, and most of them had yielded to it by 1871.

Raico would not argue that the Second Empire was entirely hostile to bourgeois fortunes. In some ways, it provided an economically freer society than does contemporary public administration, which manages the lives of democratic citizens. But the Second Empire was not the preferred society of the German bourgeois capitalists of the mid-19th century or of those liberal publicists who embraced their interests and social vision. Similarly, there is no reason to believe that the economic development of the United States required the vast managerial state that took form in the 20th century. American administrative consolidation occurred primarily because of the evolving connection between social planning and mass democracy. This connection was based originally on "protecting" the working class against the dislocations of capitalist cycles, and trade-union organization was fundamental for the public support on which the welfare state was built throughout the industrialized West. But these political developments were not essential for economic growth. The welfare state was a mere byproduct of economic modernization, which—for better or worse—restricted the free market. The same regime has promoted missionary enterprises—e.g., the spreading of "human rights" and the punishing of "undemocratic" governments, activities that commercial and banking interests have not opposed but have usually not taken the lead in advancing.

In *A Theory of Socialism and Capitalism* (Boston: Kluwer, 1989), Hans-Hermann Hoppe presents the argument that capitalist development could have taken place in a Western world full of small political communities. Without pushing counterfactual history too far, Hoppe offers the reasonable view that the political and territorial consolidations of the 19th century were not necessary in order for industrial economies to develop, standards of living to rise, and capital formation to proceed. Such economic changes would have been possible without a German Second Empire, a unified Italy, or the United States being held together in the 1860's by bloody force.

In books published in the 1950's and 60's, Yale political scientist Karl Deutsch insisted that regional and national loyalties were vanishing as technology and progress in communication were helping to bring about a world state. Deutsch's prognosis was given a political spin in the context of a cosmic vision of "spiritual pluralism" and an international "open society." This vision of a politically unified world shaped by "economic necessity" did not clash with Deutsch's ideological preferences. To the contrary: His predilection for Western unilateral disarmament was dressed up in the "scientific" prediction that the Soviet Union was collapsing before the same modernizing forces that were overwhelming the United States.

Industrial and agricultural revolutions were clearly conditions for Western economic development. Moreover, the rise of the bourgeoisie, as an entrepreneurial and investing class, furthered economic modernization as it occurred in the West. And the state has functioned, when it does its job, as a protector of life and property and a bearer of the sword against the violent. Without civil order, the benefits of enterprise would not have been available, nor could a class devoted to it have arisen and prospered. But neither capitalism nor the appearance of a state under law required a steadily expanding centralized public administration. That happened for other reasons, and not always in ways that have been socially beneficial. Soviet historian Robert Conquest provides this useful judgment about the effects of political centralization:

> The more bureaucratic and centralized the state becomes, the more inefficient and corrupt it is. This absolutely hobbled the Soviets. Similar problems are now arising in Europe, where massive corruption in the European Union bureaucracy has just been exposed. That's another accompaniment to modern centralization.

Conquest might just as well have been speaking of the increasingly centralized United States.

Paul Gottfried is a professor of humanities at Elizabethtown College in Pennsylvania and the author of After Liberalism: Mass Democracy in the Managerial State *(Princeton).*

TERRORISM

Thinking About the Fall of America

by Philip Jenkins

Following the terrorist attacks last September, matters have been moving much too fast for a monthly periodical to have any hope of keeping up with events. It may be that, by the time these words appear in print, world affairs will have been restored to happy equilibrium, justice will have triumphed, and the severed heads of Osama bin Laden and Saddam Hussein will be mounted on spikes outside the headquarters of the New York City Fire Department. On the other hand, maybe the world will be more chaotic than ever, and U.S. forces will still be struggling on an increasing number of battlefields across the globe. Whichever reality we will be confronting, one fact remains unchanged: On September 11, 2001, the United States received a series of historic lessons that we all absolutely have to learn. In the space of two horrific hours, it became grimly obvious to anyone with eyes to see just how the United States could be defeated, how we could be getting a foretaste of the fall of America. This might just be the last warning we receive. And we paid far, far too heavily for the lesson for us to ignore it.

Like most baby boomers, I grew up with the knowledge that the world might indeed be destroyed, but that the thermonuclear cataclysm would simply be too universal for us to worry about any particular country. As Tom Lehrer sang, "We'll all fry together when we fry." Given that knowledge, it was absurd to imagine the United States suffering any kind

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of defeat short of annihilation. This is what gave such a campy quality to those 1950's books and films about Soviet takeovers of the country, since everybody knew that a Soviet attack would inevitably lead to Mutually Assured Destruction. Either the United States stands, or everyone falls.

On September 11, that simple equation was proved false. We learned a lot of things on that day—not least that civilian airliners potentially make terrifyingly effective guided missiles—but high on the list of lessons was that the United States does not have a functioning intelligence system. It has no agencies able to warn of mortal dangers to the republic, or even to identify those who might be mounting such threats. Although the massive terrorist operation must have been known to hundreds of participants and sympathizers beforehand, the United States picked up not a single leak. That is terrifying. Just read some of the threat analyses published in the months before September 11 by some of the highest counterterrorism officials in both the first Bush administration and the appalling Clinton regime. They demonstrate that they did not have a clue about the seriousness of the threat, who the groups are, or what states are backing them. Reading these merrily ignorant pieces, we can see that September 11 was destined to happen, sooner or later.

Much as I hate to say this, in light of the dreadful carnage at the World Trade Center, we got off much more lightly on that day than we had any right to expect. If matters had worked out only a little differently, we might also have lost the U.S. Capitol, an act of symbolic destruction that would have dramatically and irrevocably damaged the nation's status around the globe—not to mention causing hundreds or thousands of additional deaths. The fact that this national icon still stands is due to the sheer dumb luck that one hijacked United Airlines aircraft, Flight 93, chanced to have on board some brave and determined passengers who were not going down without a fight. Say their names with awe and gratitude: Tom Burnett, Jeremy Glick, Mark Bingham, and Todd Beamer; and don't forget the unnamed others whose deeds will never be known.

If matters had been slightly different, America could have lost much more that day, because we were totally unprotected. If the terrorists had wanted, they might have taken not just four airliners but ten or twenty, and caused even more mayhem. Had they decided to, they could have combined the aerial assault with a chemical attack, as they originally intended to do during the first World Trade Center attack in 1993. By noon that day, we might have been living in a country without a functioning representative government, with the numbers of dead running into the hundreds of thousands, and with the military struggling to keep order. If you want to see the chasm between the real threat posed by terrorism and the official perception, consider the aircraft carrier that the government sailed into New York Harbor shortly after the attack, notionally to protect the city. Think of all that firepower, all those state-of-the-art fighters, all that nuclear arsenal—and nothing for the ship to do except help transport corpses. The futility of U.S. military technology, when shorn of effective intelligence, has never been more tragically symbolized.

One attack, even on this scale, cannot cripple the United States, but I do not know how many other defeats it would take before social, economic, and political life really began to collapse. Don't think this idea has not occurred to our enemies, however new its implications obviously are for our masters. As an all-too-plausible scenario for the fall of America, I offer a science-fiction novel published in 1972, which now reads like a highly relevant prophecy. In his book *The Sheep Look Up*, British author John Brunner portrays an America under siege by international terrorists—in this instance, based in Latin America rather than the Middle East. They organize aerial suicide attacks against U.S. targets, while simultaneously attacking on several other fronts. They release pests that destroy America's crops; they unleash smallpox; and they poison the reservoirs of great cities with sinister hallucinogens that drive citizens to homicidal outbreaks.

As disaster approaches, the president declares a state of emergency in phrases that would have seemed hysterically alarmist right up until late 2001. He announces that

> We have been attacked with the most cowardly, the most monstrous and the most evil weapons ever devised by wicked men. We are the victims of a combined chemical and biological attack. . . . One of the great cities of our nation today writhes in agony because the water supply, the precious diamond stream that nourishes our lives, has been poisoned. . . . Our enemies have succeeded in reducing our stocks of food to the point where we must share and share alike.

Ultimately, even these desperate measures fail. In the book's final scene, a woman overseas complains of a ghastly burning smell, only to be told: "It's from America. The wind's blowing that way." This could, just possibly, be the way the world ends—or to be more precise, the way America ends.

If this seems to resemble apocalyptic ranting on my part, well and good. The difference between us and our sworn enemies is that they are speaking the language of apocalypse and we are not, and this fact might give them a massive advantage. They know what the stakes are in this conflict, and it is high time that we learned. On that September day, many of us found out, for the first time, that millions of people around the world not only loathe us as Americans but rejoice when we are slaughtered. To understand this mentality, you might read the deranged public statements of Osama and his ilk, but you can also turn to liberal and leftist voices within our own society. Look at all the post-attack statements from American universities (and other areas bereft of sanity) saying more or less overtly what a salutary thing it was that the attacks had inflicted such a defeat on the Western civilization that they loathe. Or, as a true exercise in abnormal psychology, read Brunner's *The Sheep Look Up* and realize that the apocalypse he is describing is his conception of a happy ending. As one character declares while America burns, "We can just about restore the balance of the ecology, the biosphere . . . if we exterminate the two hundred million most extravagant and wasteful of our species." (That's us, by the way.)

The main practical lesson of recent events can be summarized starkly. For half a century, we have believed that the United States could be neither destroyed nor defeated, barring a nuclear holocaust. We were wrong. We face a deadly danger, and it is vitally necessary that we confront it. The difficulty is that most of us do not have the first idea of the revolutionary social and legal changes needed if we are to survive.

Above all, this means fundamentally

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reshaping our concept of intelligence and counterterrorism. And no, I am not talking about the wave of new security powers that have occupied center stage in the government's response to the disasters. Improving airport security is a useful contribution, as is strengthening the defenses of nuclear power plants, reservoirs, and other points of vulnerability. Yet even placing an armored division at every one of these points would be useless, since there will always be too many places to defend: We live in, by far, the most target-rich environment on the planet. If we do not know when and where the threats are coming, we cannot possibly defeat them. Worse, seeing all those uniforms and firepower provides a false sense of security, overawing everyone except the terrorists. Other "security" nostrums like national identity cards have as little merit. And lifting restrictions on bugging and eavesdropping is worse than futile, since these new powers encourage security agencies to rely on electronic surveillance technologies of the sort that proved worthless in defending the World Trade Center and the Pentagon.

There are four issues that we need to think very hard about in developing a functioning response to terrorism as we face it today. None of these is a pleasant prospect, but they all have to be considered urgently and implemented within months, not years. Based on the historical experience of many counterterrorist wars over the last half-century, I offer these propositions as a basis for debate.

First: No terrorist campaign has ever been defeated or prevented without aggressive interrogation techniques of a kind that are almost certainly illegal in the United States. Whether these methods amount to torture is a matter of semantics, but at the least, we are talking about something like the old third degree.

Second: No terrorist campaign has ever been defeated without the massive official use of moles, infiltrators, and provocateurs, including the use of dubious characters who are probably guilty themselves of criminal and terrorist acts, including murder. Together with the methods mentioned in the first point, this is the only way to obtain "human intelligence" from within groups, above all about a group's future choice of targets.

Third: No campaign has ever been carried on while terrorist suspects have the panoply of legal protections currently available in the United States, protections that include access to lawyers, limits on police powers of detention, a right to bail, and so on.

Fourth: All successful antiterrorist campaigns—and there have been many—have, at some stage, involved the extralegal assassination of suspected leaders, either inside the state under attack or overseas.

America either needs a massive change in its antiterrorist laws or, at least temporarily, the courts must be prevented from intervening in the antiterrorist war. We don't need to become a police state to save ourselves, but we have to consider how far other democracies have gone in order to preserve functioning societies. If we are not prepared to take (to some extent) the same path as Israel, France, Spain, and Great Britain, then we have no right to complain the next time terrorists massacre thousands more of our citizens. The last time I read the Declaration of Independence, it said that the first basic right of citizens was life and its preservation; and if a state fails to protect that right, then it simply has no right to continue.

Philip Jenkins is the author, most recently, of Hidden Gospels: How the Search for Jesus Lost Its Way *(Oxford University Press).*

BIOGRAPHY

Hollywood and the Convent

by Jeffrey Meyers

Biographers do much of their work in the study and the library, but they also get to some out-of-the-way places. I've interviewed people in bars, nursing homes, and insane asylums, chased down wealthy informants in country houses and elegant apartments, poor ones in drafty cottages and cluttered flats. Some welcomed me with a hefty drink, others couldn't wait to get rid of me. I am always passed on from one to the other by surviving family and friends. They seem to enjoy participating, however reluctantly at first, in the search for one of life's eternal puzzles: the heart and mind of another person. They can't help having partial views of their own, and they sometimes promote a barely disguised agenda. The biographer, positioned uncomfortably as judge and appraiser of an important or even great man or woman, who must nevertheless have been fallibly human, finds himself balancing contradictory views of his subject. When I was writing the life of Gary Cooper, his daughter Maria, an ardent Roman Catholic, suggested I accompany her on a visit to a Benedictine convent.

Though I could not guess how this would further my research, it was an offer I couldn't refuse. I knew some jolly Irish priests in Montana and had once spent the night in a monk's cell at St. John's University in Minnesota, but my knowledge of conventual life was confined to the lurid and mysterious: the cruelty and suffering of enforced seclusion in Diderot's *La Religieuse*, sexual hysteria in Huxley's *The Devils of Loudon*, sacrificial austerities in Kathryn Hume's *A Nun's Story*. I remembered the bold, jaunty description of Byron's *Don Juan*: "He learned the arts of riding, fencing, gunnery, / And how to scale a fortress—or a nunnery." I could imagine Cooper doing just that in some romantic drama of the 1940's.

Maria helped manage the musical career of her pianist-husband, Byron Janis, and looked in frequently on her mother, Rocky, now bedridden from the effects of a stroke. But she had been helping me for several weeks in New York. She had showed me her files and scrapbooks, videotapes and photographs, and introduced me to her mother and to many of her father's friends and family. She was glad to get away to a place she often visited and where she had many friends, and I looked forward to getting her to talk to me at length about her adored father. On a sparkling fall day in November 1996, the leaves still yellow and gold, we drove from Park Avenue to the Abbey of Regina Laudis in Bethlehem, Connecticut.

A reticent, shy, and modest man, Cooper was universally liked. In life, he was charming, with the gift of simplicity; on the screen, he was heroic yet tender and vulnerable. He had lived in two worlds, with his professional life in California (where he had numerous affairs) and, through Rocky, his social life among wealthy sophisticates in New York, Southampton, and Europe (where he played the role of the devoted husband). I had interviewed many actors who

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knew him, from Shirley Temple and the still-dapper Douglas Fairbanks, Jr., to Richard Widmark and Suzy Parker, his young costar in *Ten North Frederick* (one of his last and best films, where he played an older man, unhappily married, in love with a younger woman). I had also spoken to publicity agents and photographers and directors such as Billy Wilder, who emphasized the witty, worldly, sexy side of Cooper in *Love in the Afternoon*.

In New York, I had just met some of Cooper's other friends, who ruefully acknowledged his philandering reputation. Rocky had suffered the pain of his infidelity throughout her marriage, but she learned to endure his affairs with his costars. In the early 1950's, however, his long affair with young actress Patricia Neal caused a crisis that almost destroyed their family life, as wife and lover struggled for possession. For several years, he lived apart from Rocky and Maria, and when he returned he did not altogether give up his love affairs. Later, under Rocky's influence, Cooper took instruction and was received into the Catholic Church. When he contracted cancer soon afterward, religion gave him comfort and helped him accept his condition.

Maria was taking me to meet her best friend, Mother Dolores Hart, a Benedictine nun. A niece of Mario Lanza and a popular starlet in the late 1950's, Dolores had appeared in such Elvis Presley movies as *Loving You* and *King Creole*. In 1963, at the age of 25, she had given up her career to take the veil. As we drove along, Maria patiently answered all of my questions; but, though we both admired Gary as an actor, we were far apart in our assessment of his private life. Maria still believed in Gary the Good and had enlisted Dolores as her ally; I thought that he must be more interesting than that. In New York, I had also gone to see Pat Neal, who called Gary the great love of her life. Through her, I had glimpsed another side of his character: his passionate nature, his awareness of being trapped in his star status, his resistance and eventual capitulation to a wife who was stronger than he was. Pat had told me that their affair suddenly came into the open when she and Gary had driven out to Aspen, Colorado, where the Coopers had a house. Rocky's face was like stone, and 11-year-old Maria's was stained with tears. The well-brought-up little girl had looked at Pat with hatred and spat on the ground. The child who adored her father had to turn his lover into a monster of depravity.

I knew the Benedictines to be devoted to worship and work, especially agricultural labor, but I was still surprised to see rosy-cheeked nuns in high rubber boots, their denim work-habits tucked up in their belts, herding cows and stacking feed, looking like illustrations in medieval texts. The convent life is rigorous. The nuns live strictly secluded, and every day they set aside the seven canonical hours—matins, prime, terce, sext, none, vespers, and compline—for prayer and devotion. At the same time, far from practicing John Milton's "fugitive and cloistered virtue . . . that never sallies out and sees her adversary," they are in close contact with the outside world, offering a place of retreat and counsel. In the summer, they put on plays, with local actors, in an outdoor theater on the abbey grounds.

No sooner were we through the gates than we ran into Dolores herself. In her severe black robe and starched white coif, she was walking energetically along, her pretty face pink in the bright, cold air. Lively, smiling a welcome, setting me at ease, she organized our afternoon. Opening the outer folds of her habit, she took out a cell phone and pager, proudly exclaiming: "We're all modern nuns here, you know!" An hour later, we met Dolores in the wood-paneled parlor, a small space enclosed in wooden rails, with a perforated sliding panel in the door. At first, she sat behind the bars, cut off from us in a holy space, as if she were in a confessional and we the sinners, on the outside. But she soon opened the wicket gate and let us in. As if to inspire her memories, she had brought along a handsome signed photo of Cooper and propped it up against the rail. It was unnerving to sit in this tiny space with these two handsome women, each with the innocent-seeming, china-blue eyes so rare in adults. Dolores looked at me intently, wisely. We all looked at the photograph, summoning up whatever insights we could muster.

Dolores started the discussion by telling me about herself. The same age as Maria, she had met the Coopers in May 1959 through the son of actor Joel McCrea. When she first came to their house, she saw a man in old clothes kneeling on the ground with his back to her. Assuming he was the gardener, she asked if the family were at home. To her surprise, Cooper turned around and replied, "Yup," and directed her to the door. On later visits, he jumped up graciously to shake her hand and called her "Miss Dolores." He always seemed comfortingly familiar and normal, despite the unreality of Hollywood. The Coopers treated the inexperienced Dolores like a daughter and taught her how to handle the sharks of the movie world. By comparison to Gary, the athletic yet elegant Rocky seemed crisp and curt, strong and in charge, his wife and best buddy.

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Rocky took Dolores in hand when they were visiting Paris. Insisting that Dolores could no longer look like a Marymount schoolgirl and mistakenly assuming the studio would pay for her wardrobe, Rocky made her spend her last $800 on clothes and left her with no money. But, like the malleable Maria, Dolores was glad to be guided by an experienced woman of the world. When Dolores was dining in Paris with the Coopers, a Frenchman rudely asked, "I wonder which one is his wife?" Borrowing his famous line from *The Virginian*, Cooper jokingly faced him down and said: "When you say that, smile." Dolores did not want to jeopardize her personal relationship with the Coopers by working with Gary, rejecting as too dangerous the part of his daughter (eventually played by Diane Varsi) in *Ten North Frederick*. In 1961, she went to say goodbye to him when he was dying of cancer. Reserved as ever, he did not talk about himself but asked about her work, maintaining his fatherly relationship until the very end.

"Yes," I said, "but what about Gary's moral character? He was an inveterate ladies' man. How do you reconcile this side of his nature with your favorable view of him?" Dolores viewed Cooper's affair with Patricia Neal as a protracted struggle that ended when he decided that he didn't want to break up the family, valued his old way of life, couldn't bear to lose Maria, and—finally—wanted Rocky more than any other woman. She frankly acknowledged his many adulterous affairs, but charitably resolved the moral issue. She explained that Gary had an extraordinary capacity for love: He could love many women intensely and more than one woman at a time. He inspired love in others, and this often caused great difficulty. He resolved these emotional conflicts through the Church, which provided a religious context and allowed him to achieve a "eucharistic love" that was purged of the physical element.

According to Maria, her father rarely discussed his conversion with his family, and neither she nor Rocky put pressure on him to become a Catholic for their sake. He had never gone to church, apart from Mass at Christmas and Easter, and always looked on religion as their affair. But one Sunday, instead of reading the newspapers in bed, he suddenly decided to go to Mass with them. Maria may not have known that the original impetus had come from Rocky, who, as Fr. Harold Ford later told me, "never let up until he finally became a Catholic." One Sunday, Rocky had announced to Ford, a young priest at the posh Beverly Hills Church of the Good Shepherd (also known as Our Lady of the Cadillacs): "I want to make my husband a Catholic. What can we do about bringing him into the Church?" Ford instructed him in the Faith. Cooper, who certainly wanted to please Rocky and Maria and draw the family together, was baptized as a Catholic in April 1959.

Cooper's story would turn up again in Mother Dolores's life. Pat Neal had gone on to marry and have a family. In the 1970's, she suffered a crippling stroke; a year or so later, her husband, Roald Dahl, left her for a younger woman. By chance, she had run into Maria, who told her about the abbey and suggested she go there for counseling. She had come to the convent and worked through the anger of her loss. Invited to stay, Pat lived there for several months and wrote her autobiography, *As I Am* (1988). Dolores cemented the reconciliation between Pat, Rocky, and Maria. Four women, it seemed, had contended for Gary's soul, and I now sat in the dim parlor with four bright blue eyes looking into mine.

As a special honor, I was whisked off in the afternoon gloom to an audience with the lady abbess, who lived on the top floor of a beautifully designed modern building. She sat in the lamplight in a huge chair, her feet on a low stool. Dolores, who preceded us, knelt and kissed her hand. Ancient of days, the abbess (who must have been feeling the cold) wore a woolly cape over her habit and thick stockings and sandals. Her wrinkled face was deep in shadow, and she seemed to live in a private world of her own. We sat in some upright chairs in a circle before her. Directly behind her, on one wall of the octagonal chamber, hung a four-foot photograph of the rough and even brutal Gen. George Patton (complete with silver revolvers). The abbess told us the emotional story of how the great general had liberated her convent during the Normandy campaign and how, inspired by gratitude, she had founded the abbey in America.

I was mystified by this strange interview, punctuated by awkward silences, and wondered what it could possibly have to do with Gary Cooper. When I asked what the actor meant to her, she insisted, in her strongly accented English, "Ve muss enfluenze the Yoos"—and I thought she was bent on forcible conversion of nonbelievers. In fact, she was talking about the moral example of one of his films. She had shown his idealistic and exemplary film *High Noon* to local delinquent *youths*. I later realized that the lady abbess, who had counseled Pat Neal herself, understood the devastating effects of physical passion. By now, I had consumed several cups of tea and could think of nothing more spiritual than the men's room, presumably in short supply in this building. By special dispensation, Mother Dolores allowed me to use the ladies'.

I followed Maria to vespers in the modern chapel, as brightly lit as the abbess's room was dark. The nuns filed in behind a grille and chanted their plainsong. I felt dizzy and drowsy, overcome with the warmth of the chapel and the oddness of my situation, and decided to slip away and lie down for a few minutes.

I had arranged to meet Maria and another guest, a New York theatrical agent, for dinner in a local restaurant. It was blandly old-fashioned, with mashed potatoes, soft rolls, and jello for dessert, but our conversation was lively, and I was wide awake again. It was close to ten o'clock by now, and Maria and I repaired to the white clapboard guest house on the abbey grounds. It looked like a shabby old boarding house, with flowered wallpaper, creaky wood floors and roller blinds, and the heat blasting from dusty old radiators. There were several weekend guests: people in search of calm and reflection and nuns' parents come for a visit. We settled down in the living room to a serious discussion, which lasted until well after midnight, of Cooper's conversion to Catholicism two years before his death.

Regina Landis—with no cruelty, hysteria, or unwelcome intruders—was very different from my expectations. The pace of our visit was surprisingly frenetic, as I had gone from one encounter to another. I had no time for contemplation, no chance to absorb the experience or take a walk in the surrounding woods. The convent—connected to an unbroken tradition that went back to the Middle Ages—had the self-enclosed quality of a world within the world and retained all of its mystery.

The paperback editions of Jeffrey Meyers' Orwell *(Norton) and* Privileged Moments: Encounters with Writers *(Wisconsin) appeared last fall.*

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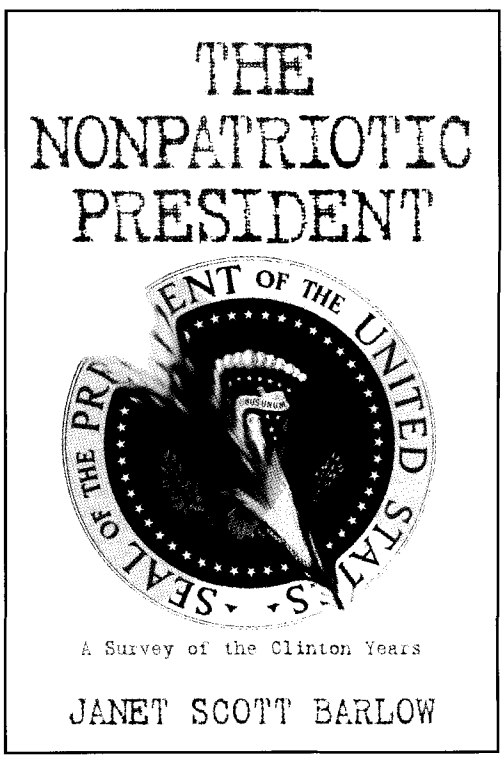

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by George McCartney

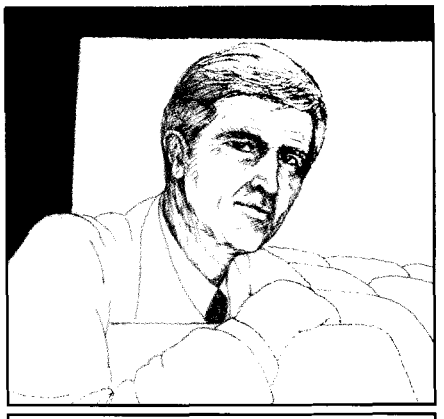
False Redeemers

American film would be poorer without Robert Redford. As an actor and as a director, he has given us some vastly entertaining movies along with a handful of genuinely original and challenging dramas. *Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid* (1969) and *The Sting* (1973) will never lose their appeal. *The Candidate* (1972) is arguably the best film ever made about the inner workings of a political campaign. Two or three of his directing efforts have deservedly attained classic status, especially *Quiz Show* (1994), his ingenious examination of America's class structure through the prism of early television. Yet, as an actor, Redford can be exasperating. He often seems to be condescending to his characters, holding back as if he thought it gauche to be too intense. True, this self-regarding reticence has worked in some films. It added a element of mystery to *The Natural* (1984). In other films, however, he seems puritanically aloof, a man who doesn't want to soil his hands in the mess of other peoples' lives. Watch him in *The Horse Whisperer* (1998), for example.

In *The Last Castle*, Redford has been encouraged to emphasize this aspect of his screen persona. Doing so, he becomes a black hole at the center of the film. The other actors are left to revolve around him in varying degrees of nearly religious awe.

The implausible plot centers on three-star Gen. Eugene Irwin, who has been sentenced to ten years in a military prison for insubordination. As the film begins, he is being marched under guard across a jailyard to the warden's office. Unaccountably, he is wearing his decorated uniform—an interesting choice of garb given his disgrace. In short order, we are given his story, compliments of the 1,200 prisoners milling about the grounds. Presumably, they are on recess so they can witness Redford's grand entrance. As different voices speak, we learn that he has distinguished himself as a POW in Vietnam, where his unbending courage in the face of torture inspired his fellow prisoners with the hope they needed to survive. He has served with similar honor in various campaigns around the world, including Bosnia. He even wrote a thoughtful book on military matters, *The Burden of Command*. Recently, however, he has blundered badly, disobeying his Commander in Chief—the President. He conducted a foray into Burundi to capture a nasty warlord, managing to lose eight men in what turned out to be a fruitless venture. For this, he has been sentenced to hard time in a maximum security institution filled with meatheads, retards, and thugs. Not a likely fate for a three-star general, you say? Ah, but the noble Irwin thinks he deserves it. When a fellow officer explains how he could easily be spared this indignity, he flatly rejects the offer. "What I did was wrong," he solemnly declares, his jaw set. And that's that.

In the prison, he meets his opposite in the warden, Colonel Winter. James Gandolfini plays Winter as a stertorous martinet, snuffling and sighing noisily with each new turn of events. He is perpetually simmering and can barely contain his steam. He prides himself on waging war against the "animals" under his none-too-gentle care. The slightest infraction by one of the inmates is met with either a hail of rubber bullets or high-pressure hosing from a water cannon. These tactics are supposed to be relatively harmless, but Winter's men have managed to wield them to lethal effect in at least two cases. Like all bullies, Winter is easily impressed by higher authority. When Irwin shows up on his doorstep, his welcome is almost servile. The man may be his prisoner, but Winter knows his record, has read his book, and feels honored by his presence, however diminished. Irwin, however, rebuffs him at first sight. After proudly showing him his collection of war memorabilia, including swords, guns, and tin soldiers, Winter steps into the next room to get Irwin's book so the general can sign it for him. Without bothering to lower his voice, Irwin remarks to the lieutenant guarding him that such collections are kept by men who have never seen battle. Winter hears this, and the die is cast: Winter will do his worst and Irwin will stand up to him. It doesn't take a genius to predict that the men in the prison—Winter's animals—will have their dignity restored by Irwin's insouciant leadership. Of course, it helps that every one of them is a diamond in the rough. They have all been waiting for Irwin's burnishing hand to bring their innate honor to a dazzling luster.



The Last Castle

Produced and distributed by
DreamWorks
Directed by Rod Lurie
Screenplay by David Scarpa

Training Day

Produced by Outlaw Productions
Directed by Antoine Fuqua
Screenplay by David Ayer
Released by Warner Bros.

Irwin first proves his leadership by physically stopping a guard from clubbing a hapless prisoner. "You're better than that," he tells the startled jailkeeper. For this outrage, Winter assigns General Irwin the task of moving a rock pile, stone by 25-pound stone, across some 20 yards of the prison grounds. As always happens at such moments in such films, the other prisoners form an appraising gauntlet, taking bets on whether or not he will stay the course in the heat of the noonday sun. Irwin has no choice but to remove his shirt, which gives Redford a twofold opportunity. He gets to show off his buff physique (impressive for a 64-year-old) and, at the same time, reveal his character's scourged back, a roadmap of scars inflicted by his Vietnamese captors. This sight elicits knowing approval from his fellow inmates. Needless to say, Irwin comes through his challenge manfully and wins the discipleship of all the prisoners, save the cynical Yates (Mark Ruffalo), whose father just happened to be in the same POW prison with Irwin. For

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reasons never made clear, this young man is still angry with his late father and has transposed his displeasure to Irwin. He is destined, of course, to become the Judas of the piece. As you may already have guessed, the film is shot through with Christ symbolism.

What happens next would be marvelously absurd if Lurie had any trace of humor. Taking advantage of his hard-won respect, Irwin decides to help his admirers regain theirs. He has the men build a wall with the rock pile. Winter counters by ordering his guards to bulldoze it. When one of the prisoners tries to block the bulldozer, Winter has him shot with a rubber bullet, aimed lethally at his head. Irwin, whose record of accomplishment is universally applauded and whose innumerable friends occupy stratospheric places, decides that there is only one thing to do: He must lead the prisoners in an uprising against the warden. Gathering the men together, he plots to take control first of the jailyard, then the surveillance towers, the prison helicopter, and—finally—the flag. As the men look on wonderingly, he admits that securing the helicopter is "going to be a bitch." No kidding.

Last year, Lurie gave us *The Contender*, an insufferably pious film about liberal rectitude. You can see why he chose Redford for this year's outing. In recent films, the erstwhile Sundance Kid has been playing parts that seem to be warm-ups for canonization. In *The Last Castle*, he gets his wish and more, as he is elevated to the status of savior. Now, I am fully in favor of narratives that echo the ur-narrative of our culture. When redeemers become this smugly self-righteous, however, they make damnation look like a blessing.

Lurie seems to think he's making another *Bridge on the River Kwai* mixed with some elements from *Cool Hand Luke* and perhaps a tincture of *Tunes of Glory*. But he has neither the insight nor the wit to handle material like this. He has absolutely no talent for registering human ambiguity, a talent essential to such narratives, especially those that employ Messianic undertones. A mortal would have to be either a fool or a madman not to question both the legitimacy of such a call and his ability to answer it. Who would claim with certainty to be able to distinguish between God's will and his own, between selfless vocation and arrogant selfishness? Lurie and Redford, that's who.

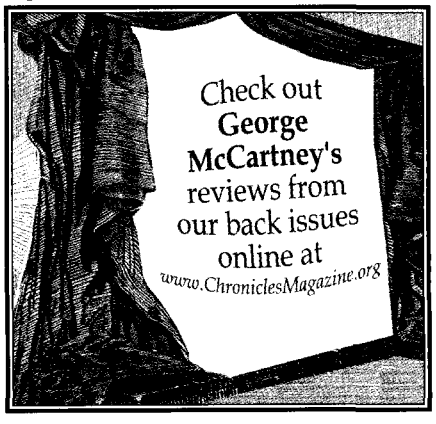
Now that Denzel Washington has ascended to star status, he is no doubt beset by the same temptation that bedevils Redford. In Washington's case, the temptation has taken a specific form. For more than a decade, he has been promising to become our era's Sidney Poitier: the black man with bottomless reserves of decency and a marked penchant for self-abnegation. It's the Stepin Fetchit routine turned inside out. The Poitier school of acting rejects comical subservience and demands instead unfaltering nobility from performers of color. But this is typecasting no less confining than Fetchit's and lacks even the foil of his amusing shuck and jive.

With *Training Day*, Washington has wisely taken a hall pass from the Poitier curriculum, using the opportunity to get into some very creative mischief. As narcotics detective Alonzo Harris, he plays a seductive monster who routinely abuses his police power, all the while rationalizing his vile methods with a sweetly infectious smile. He sports a skull cap on his noggin and a leather jacket on his broad shoulders. A silver cross dangles from his neck, and a diamond earring sparkles from his ear. When he laughs, he throws back his head and his gleaming pearly whites dominate his face. Is his dental exuberance a sign of camaraderie or menace? He looks and moves just like the drug dealers he has been deputized to arrest. Of course, this is an undercover cop's *modus operandi*. But as he cuts one corner after another, beating up some people, letting others go, pocketing stashes of this and that on his rounds, you can't tell whose side he is on. Whenever he is asked about his behavior, he flashes his steroidal teeth and croons, "It's all goooood." This is certainly true of Washington's performance, though his character remains a mystery.

The film's first 40 minutes are about as clever as any drug drama I have seen and quite a bit better than most. Thereafter, you cannot help feeling cheated. After a rocketing start boosted by Washington's explosive performance, the whole enterprise fizzles to the level of standard TV fare. The plot swerves lazily into car and foot chases, followed by gunfights between the absolutely good and the unspeakably bad—in other words, the usual bunkum.

The film begins with an interesting premise. It sets out to dramatize a rookie's first day as an undercover narcotics officer. The neophyte is Ethan Hawke as Jake Hoyt, and his first assignment is to be Alonzo's partner. For someone who is supposed to have spent 19 months as an uniformed patrolman, he is incredibly naive about what he is getting into. But you suspend your disbelief, knowing that he is meant to be your surrogate. You are about to see Alonzo's world through Hoyt's innocent eyes. In no time at all, the older man leads Hoyt down the rabbit hole of drug enforcement. Forced to join Alonzo in rousting college kids, taking their marijuana away, and turning them loose, Hoyt finds himself compromised on every side. Alonzo explains that good narcs have to protect the sheep from the wolves; to do so, they have to be wolves themselves. He insists that Hoyt smoke a pipeful of the pot. After all, a narc has "to know and love drugs." When Hoyt refuses, Alonzo puts his gun to his head. "You'd be dead, you ever refuse to take a hit from some drug dealer," he snarls. The next moment he smiles tolerantly: It is just training. Not to fail the test, Hoyt takes the pipe. Once he's under the influence, things get much weirder. The partners visit a dealer's home so Alonzo can steal his ill-gotten gains. Well, he needs funds to do his police work, doesn't he? He needs to setup buys and all that, right? Next, he takes the rookie to see a man who is either an undercover cop or a drug dealer—or possibly both. As the older men reminisce and talk business, Hoyt is left to wonder what's what. When Alonzo playfully calls Hoyt his "nigger," we know we are in an Alice-in-Wonderland world where nothing is as it seems. White is black, and black, white; upper is lower, and lower, upper. As for distinguishing virtue from vice, forget about it.

So far, so dizzying. You begin to feel that, yes, this is the nightmare our inane drug policies have unleashed on our body politic. Then the film loses its nerve. Too bad. We need more convincing portrayals of our drug war's unacceptable collateral damage. c



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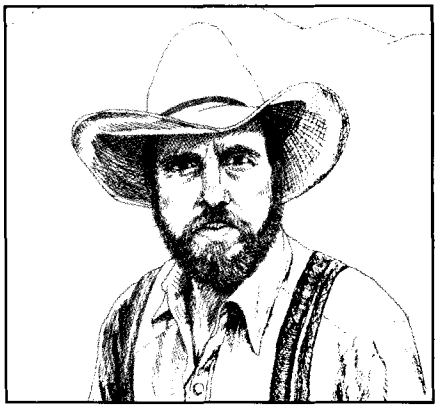
'69 Plus 40



Sam Nash pushed the empty beer bottle away across the knife-scarred table. "I'm ready to hunt bulls," he said. "We need to be making tracks for the mountain soon, before it gets too dark to put a camp in up there."

Jim McCorkle set his chin forward but didn't answer right away. He'd ordered black coffee and refused a third refill when Sam was already on the second beer. "I'm ready when you are," he said finally.

Beyond the plateglass window, tall cottonwoods stained orange and yellow followed the curve of an invisible creek across a green meadow on which brown hay bales lay evenly spaced. Past the meadow, buff-colored foothills shored up the dark frontal face of the mountains to make a platform for the granite peaks farther back in the range to stand on. The peaks were dusted with snow where the rock wasn't too steep to hold it, and a rime of snow showed along the top of the timbered wall overlooking the valley. Jim didn't like the snow and cold. He'd had enough of being wet and uncomfortable in Vietnam, 40 years ago. From where they hung on the wall behind the bar, the mounted elk and moose and deer heads could see the mountains through the window, too. Their glassy eyes looked farseeing and sad, as if they had a longing to be back there.

The drive from Sheridan up to the campsite was 55 miles, and the hunters had to chain up for the last ten. A foot of snow lay between the forest trees, and a light snow fell as Sam and Jim unhooked the trailer from the pickup truck, cranked the camper up, and fixed a camp. They were former Marine Corps buddies and still worked well together, never needing to ask each other where help was wanted or how, the way it had been for them in Vietnam since before Sam was hit in the thigh by a Cong sniper and Jim tourniqueted the wound with his belt and piggybacked him deeper into the jungle where Charlie couldn't find them. When the bedrolls had been spread on the bunks and Sam was cutting fire logs with a chainsaw, Jim brought his new rifle from the truck and laid it carefully in its leather case lined with lambswool across the foldaway table inside the camper. Jim had spent a year and a half building the rifle himself, and he was very proud of it. The gun was a .375 caliber with a Mauser action, powerful enough to take the largest and most dangerous game in Africa but almost unknown to Wyoming hunters, in spite of its surgical perforation of elk and deer. Although Jim had been in love with the idea of the hunt since he was four or five years old, the thrill for him in hunting elk this year was the chance to test the new rifle in the field.

It was dark before the camp was secure. Sam produced a bottle of single-malt scotch, and they drank a glass apiece before heating supper on the gas stove. For his supper, Jim needed only boiling water to add to the MREs he ordered from an Army-Navy store—all the food he carried with him into the field. After eating, they washed up and sat outside in heavy jackets around the blazing fire Sam had built within the circle of trees beneath the hanging stars.

"You remember the night hit on that ammo dump the summer before we left country in '69?" Jim asked. "Five thousand 250-pound bombs going up in a red-and-orange mushroom cloud and the shock wave like a halo all around the damn thing."

"I remember it," Sam told him, shortly, "but after 40 years, I don't think about it."

An hour before first light the next morning, the thermometer on the wall of the camper read six degrees. The gas heater had gone off during the night, the sink was seized up, and all the supplies that could freeze had. When Jim awoke, the neck of the mummy bag crackled with hoarfrost where his breath had frozen. He got out of it as fast as he could and began pulling woolen service pants on over the long johns. "My knee's swollen up the size of a grapefruit this morning," he said. Sam, who was on his knees in red suspenders over long johns trying to restart the heater, didn't answer him, and Jim ate 400 mg of Ibuprofin to reduce the swelling.

The gas cookstove worked fine. They heated water for coffee on the burner and ate cereal with hot water added to it out of tin bowls. The sky was pink in the east and the stars had faded out overhead when they left the trailer, wearing their hunter's orange coats and carrying the guns still in the cases. The cold stung their noses and burned their fingers inside the gloves as they climbed up to the bench seat of Sam's pickup, left running for ten minutes already in the steam cloud of its own exhaust. Sam set the gun case muzzle down on the floorboard and unzipped it below the forward lens of the telescopic sights. "OK," he said, "let's go find us a couple of elk to shoot."

All morning they drove on the two-track roads, looking for tracks on either side in the snow and not finding any except for those of rabbits and squirrels, a few deer, and two moose. A little before ten the wind got up, whipping the snow into scalloped patterns and trailing banners of snow from the highest peaks. Though they met other hunters on the road, no opening-morning shots echoed in the granite basins around.

"The damn wind isn't helping any," Sam remarked, cheerfully.

"I think it's a dead end," Jim told him.

Sam set his coffee cup back in its holder.

"Don't start with that now, Jim," he said. "You swore the last time you wouldn't do it again."

"I think they've gone over the face already. We've driven three hours without cutting a single track."

"Even if you're right, there's bound to be stragglers we can get onto. I'm hunting bulls this week, and I mean to shoot one if I have to put in a spike camp and hike a hundred miles to do it."

Jim McCorkle didn't answer him. Instead, he put his finger through the partway-open gun case and explored with his finger end the expertly machined action of the rifle he had spent the past two winters constructing. As well as it had fired at

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the range, he knew even without trying the gun how it would perform in a field situation.

Around 11:00, Sam proposed hiking a couple of miles in to the Sawmill Lakes where there had been elk the year before. They left the truck along the side of the road, slung the survival packs on their backs and shouldered the rifles, and started off in a foot of fresh snow, following the trail downhill through the forest. The slippery, snow-covered stones turned Jim's ankles annoyingly, and he could feel the bad knee enlarging as they went. The snow was glaring white among the vivid green trees, and the sky a depthless ultraviolet above the black tips of the firs. The lakes had not iced over yet, and two pairs of mallard ducks took off over the open water on a beeline as they approached, wings beating fast across the glitter of their own spray.

"God, what a day," Sam exclaimed. He brushed the snow from a rock with the side of his glove, seated himself, and took an antelope sandwich from his pack. "Even if we don't see anything to shoot, it's worth the effort just to be in here, away from it all."

Jim nodded absently and felt his knee under the wool pants, dreading the climb back out. It was all too much like Vietnam, the monsoon rains replaced by snow and the biting high-elevational winds.

They ate an early supper that evening and sat up drinking scotch as they looked over the topographical maps spread between them across the foldaway table.

"I heard a week ago they'd seen elk down on the golf course," Sam remembered. "My guess is, with the drought, when the first snow came they had no reason to stay high where there's nothing for them to eat anyway. I'd say our best chance is to hunt the west side above Shell Canyon in the morning, see if we can pick up any tracks over there. Does that sound like a plan to you?"

"Sure," Jim, who was thinking of a warm bed and other comforts of home, told him. The scotch, though a fine one, was a poor substitute, in his opinion.

At bedtime, Sam turned the overhead lights off to save the battery, and the two men undressed by flashlight and climbed up to the bunk beds at each end of the camper. "Something tells me tomorrow's going to be our lucky day," he said in a muffled voice from inside the bag. "They can't *all* be down on private land, not this early in the season."

Jim lay on his back looking up at the stretched canvas overhead where condensation drops were forming.

"You know," he said, "there's times I think I don't want to hunt, ever again. I had enough of killing in Vietnam."

In the dark, Sam was quiet for almost a minute. Then he said, "Vietnam is the biggest thing in your life still, after 40 years. Isn't it, Jim?"

A droplet of icy water fell and hit Jim on the forehead between the edge of his wool cap and his right eyebrow. Very soon now, the other drops would freeze in place and quit falling.

"I don't know how to answer your question," he said finally.

In the morning it was warmer. The snow that had been grainy and crisp the day before slumped now, and patches of mud and gravel showed in the snow-packed road.

"With any luck, the critters will be out soaking up the afternoon sun," Sam encouraged him. "Looks like you might get to try your new cannon out after all, Jim."

Jim nodded and swallowed an Ibuprofin. The swelling in his knee had gone down overnight, thanks to 12 straight hours' rest. He hated to think what it was going to feel like after seven or eight hours in the field, tramping through snow and sagebrush.

They stopped at the blacktop to unchain and drove south on Highway 14 across the high plateau to Granite Pass, then down to Granite Creek below the pitched, open slope of Cedar Mountain. Tracks descended through the snow and sagebrush from the rocky tors above, all of them headed downhill toward Shell Canyon and the Bighorn Basin below it. Pickup trucks with California, Oregon, and Texas plates were pulled onto the shoulder of the road, and hunters in orange coats stood beside them, glassing the tracks across the creek.

"Thousands of dollars for a license and the trip out here, and the hunt's over even before it begun," Jim said.

"It's over if you park your fat ass beside your truck and just stand there looking," Sam told him. "I bet if a guy was to drive back up the road a ways and get in around behind Cedar Mountain, he could maybe come on a few stragglers waiting to jump off the hill. It's worth a try, isn't it? Better than going back to camp and listen to the ice freeze in the water bucket."

They came on a two-track going west off the highway and followed it up to a treeless saddle between two pinnacles of orange rock grown around with the black fir trees. Sam set the parking brake, and he and Jim got out to inspect a line of tracks crossing from one of the pinnacles to the other. They were the tracks of a bull elk, apparently a large one, but slumped with the snow into grey and nearly formless blurs.

"Two days old, maybe three," Sam pronounced. "Probably he's down on private land around Shell right now, tearing up some rancher's hayrick. Man, don't you just love it being up here, though! Sometimes, I think I missed my calling as a CPA—wish I'd decided to become a sheepherder instead."

From the saddle, they looked out over green timbered ridges sloping down to the tawny foothills and across the desert basin stretching in shades of ochre and red to the dark pediment of the Absaroka Mountains, their snowy superstructure gleaming against a brilliant October sky.

"I have to have a purpose when I'm in the field," Jim said, a little stiffly. Though not an envious man, he was aware of the difference between his friend's lucrative career and his own ne'er-do-well one.

"I *do* have a purpose," Sam told him, quietly. "Look, man, I love you—you saved my life, all those many years ago—but I like to hunt, and hunt hard. It doesn't mean we aren't friends anymore. Only next year, each of us goes his own way come hunting season—OK?"

Later, when they were packing in the camper and cranking the top down into the trailer part, Jim felt sad and a little ashamed. He hadn't meant to spoil Sam's hunt, and he'd wanted very much to try the new rifle in the field. Only his knee hurt him, and evening was coming on cold, and it was all so much effort and discomfort. He'd had enough of being wet and miserable in Vietnam, and when he had landed in San Diego, there was a bunch of hippies with signs demonstrating at the airport, calling him a killer.

Well, he *was* a killer, and he didn't regret the people he'd killed, even if it had turned out to be so much wasted effort, in the end. He'd done his duty back then, and that was all that could be asked of any man. What did it matter that it happened 40 years ago? As he understood his life, his career as a military officer never really ended, only the dangerous and uncomfortable aspects of it had. The rest would go marching on forever, until he died. Jim McCorkle had decided long ago he really had no problem with that.

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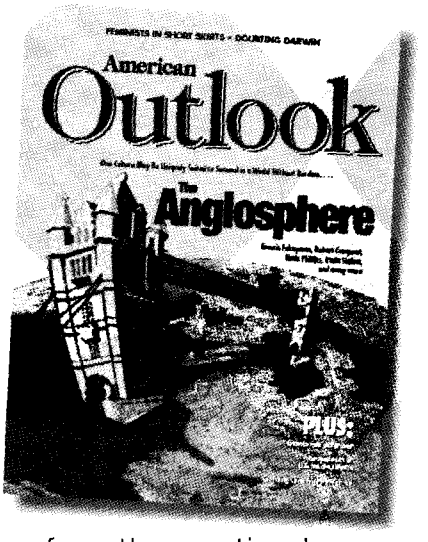

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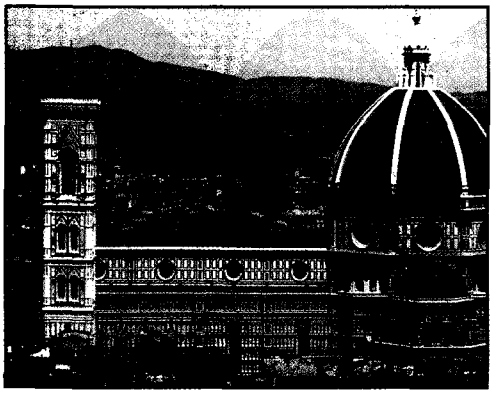
TOSCANA—LAND OF THE REAL MULTICULTURALISTS



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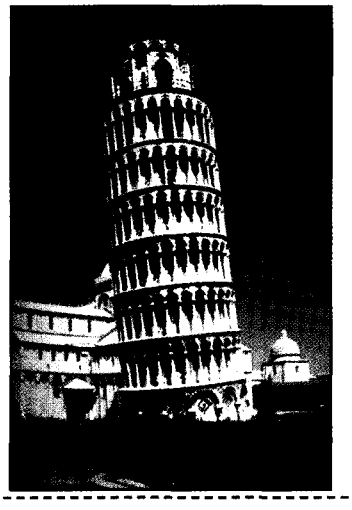

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